RICHELIEU

ARTHUR GOODRICH

EDWARD BULWER-LYTTON

Goodrich 155994

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RICHELIEU

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WALTER HAMPDEN AS CARDINAL RICHELIEU

RICHELIEU

A new version of Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton's play of the same name

by

Arthur Goodrich

Together with Lord Lytton's Original Text

Introduction by
Clayton Hamilton

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ARTHUR GOODRICH

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INTRODUCTION

I

In every period, people seek the theater for the purpose of ascending out of living into life. Throughout the two or three hours' traffic of the stage, they desire to immerse themselves in the illusion of reality. But this miracle, necessarily, may be accomplished only within the compass of their own imaginations. All that the dramatist can do, with the aid of his actors and of several lesser groups of collaborative artists, is to assemble certain symbols which, through the avenues of sound and sight, are calculated carefully to stimulate the imagination of the assembled populace. If the play happens only on the stage, it will fail of its effect. It cannot, in any real sense, be recognized as an achievement of theatric art until it seems—so to speak—to pour itself over the footlights and to happen within the minds and hearts of the people sitting out in front.

Though the imaginative faculty is fundamental with the human race, the manner of its easy exercise varies markedly from period to period, according to the customs of the time. In certain centuries, for instance, the public has been prevailingly ear-minded; but in other centuries—the present, for example—it has become overwhelmingly eye-minded. According to the temper of the time, in this regard, a theatric artist facing an assembled mob in the Place de la Concorde would know

whether to assault the ear with the music of "La Marseillaise" or to assault the eye by flaunting in the wind the tri-color of France.

II

In history, we may observe the fact that the only plays which have ever survived their own generation in the theater have been plays which have afforded an outstanding opportunity for the exploitation of the actor's art. From the points of view of dramatic and literary criticism, it is probable that both "Othello" and "Macbeth" should be rated as greater achievements than the comparatively formless tragedy of "Hamlet", yet "Hamlet" is acted fifty times as often as "Othello" or "Macbeth," because it provides a very showy part in which every actor is ambitious to appear.

A great dramatist, Alexandre Dumas *fils,* complained, toward the end of his distinguished career, that he was constantly exploited as the author of "La Dame aux Camélias"—a cheap and tawdry piece which he had written in eight days, at the early age of twenty-one. This drama, undeniably, is a lesser work of art than "Le Demi-Monde" or half a dozen other compositions of the dramatist's maturity; yet it yielded to the theater a conspicuous acting part which every emotional actress, for a century, has been ambitious to essay.

III

Similarly, the persistence on the stage, for so long a time after its first success, of Sir Edward Bulwer-

Lytton's "Richelieu" was due less to its literary, or even to its theatric, excellence than to the fact that it provided a conspicuous opportunity for the exploitation of the actor's art.

This play, first produced in 1839, was written for William Charles Macready and afforded that great actor one of the outstanding parts in his career. This central character became so celebrated that it was re-created by the foremost actors of the succeeding generation. In the United States, the character of Richelieu became one of the leading items in the repertory of the incomparable Edwin Booth, and it was the best of all the parts of Lawrence Barrett; and, in England, this same character achieved a conspicuous position in the repertory of Sir Henry Irving. Throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century, while the name and fame of Shakespeare still held dominion over the theaters of Great Britain and America, the general public, finding "Richelieu" regularly alternated on the playbills with "Hamlet" and "Macbeth," ascribed its authorship to Shakespeare, in utter ignorance of the historic fact that the Cardinal of France did not arrive at his maturity until half a century after the death of the Bard of Avon.

IV

In this present period of the theater, the only actor, playing regularly on either side of the Atlantic, who has attained conspicuous success in such many and various parts of Shakespeare's as Hamlet, Othello, Macbeth,

Shylock, Henry V, Romeo, Marc Antony, and several others, is Walter Hampden. Quite naturally, a demand has arisen among the theater-going public to see him in the famous part of Richelieu.

But Bulwer-Lytton's play no longer satisfies the altered customs of the times. Gradually it had been pushed off the stage and relegated to the library. Although it still provides conspicuously a great acting part and many moments of fine drama, it obtrudes, upon its surface, many features which the contemporary public, right or wrong, would find dull, or unreal, or even amusing at its serious moments.

Consequently, for the use of Walter Hampden as an actor, Arthur Goodrich—who, in his play "Caponsacchi," had already successfully dramatized for Mr. Hampden Browning's "The Ring and The Book"—has endeavored to reconstruct and to rewrite the text of "Richelieu" in such a manner that this old play, lost of itself to the contemporary theater, might come alive again for the present generation.

V

The task imposed upon Mr. Goodrich in rewriting "Richelieu" was one of peculiar delicacy. It was necessary for him to tamper with, indeed to do violence to, a text which, though not established as one of the classics of literature, had long been accepted as one of the classics of the theater.

Lord Lytton, ninety years ago, wrote "Richelieu" in a period which was more ear-minded than eye-minded.

In honest truth, it was a period when mere high-sounding phrases often passed as poetry and when, as well, sentiment did not always have to be sincere to satisfy the groundlings if only the language were lofty enough. So Mr. Goodrich's first problem was to re-write Bulwer in simple, understandable blank verse which, without pretension, could be spoken clearly and concisely in the present-day theater.

The original text is printed in this volume with Mr. Goodrich's revised play, and students who wish to do so may make their own comparisons. I shall select merely one or two passages at random. In Act I, Scene II, for example, a speech of Richelieu's begins in Bulwer's play as follows:

Out on you!
Have I not one by one from such fair shoots
Pluck'd the insidious ivy of his love?
And shall it creep around my blossoming tree
Where innocent thoughts, like happy birds, make music
That spirits in Heaven might hear?

He is talking of his ward, Julie, and of the King's passion for her.

In Mr. Goodrich's play this passage reads:

Poor Julie!
She needs protection then. So is our King
Philandering again? I spend full half
My time checking his infidelities.

Again in the murder scene, Julie tells Richelieu of her experience at the King's Palace.

In Bulwer:

JULIE

And then at night—alone—this night—all still
He sought my presence—dared—thou read'st the heart,
Read mine! I cannot speak it.

RICHELIEU

He a King—
You—woman. Well, you yielded!

JULIE

Cardinal!
Dare you say "yielded"? Humbled and abashed
He from the chamber crept—this mighty Louis,
Crept like a baffled felon! Yielded! Ah,
More royalty in woman's honest heart
Than dwells within the crowned Majesty
And sceptered anger of a hundred Kings!
Yielded! Heavens! Yielded!

RICHELIEU

To my heart—close—close!
The world would never need a Richelieu, if
Men—bearded, mail'd men—the Lords of Earth—
Resisted flattery, falsehood, avarice, pride
As this poor child with the dove's innocent scorn
Her sex's tempters, Vanity and Power!

In Goodrich:

JULIE

And there—alone—this night—all still—he came
And dared—!

RICHELIEU

Hm. He a King. You—woman. So—
You yielded?

JULIE
Cardinal!

RICHELIEU
So—you did not yield.
Brave Julie! How few women at the Court
Would dare say no to Louis.

There are literally hundreds of passages throughout the play, particularly in its latter two acts, which evidence, as well as these chance-chosen ones, the marked change from Bulwer's text. Not being myself of a mathematical turn of mind I had a friend, whom I could trust for such a task, analyze the new Goodrich text in comparison with the Bulwer original, with the following interesting result: Less than thirty per cent of the lines in this "Richelieu" are Bulwer's. Approximately forty per cent are wholly new. The remainder are Bulwer lines which Goodrich has completely rewritten. In other words, Mr. Goodrich has either written himself, or rewritten from Bulwer, nearly three-quarters of this new version of "Richelieu."

Passing from the text itself, the Bulwer play was constructed stragglingly in five acts. Mr. Goodrich has tightened it to three, and the time in which the action takes place has been shortened one-half. By this tightening and shortening he has greatly quickened the pace of the action, and given it a plausibility it lacked before. Would any modern audience believe that the shrewd Baradas would have hunted three days for the despatch without sending a duplicate to Bouillon?

Of course, the old conventions, such as soliloquies and asides, had to be dispensed with. They were of infinite help to the older dramatists, and the task of telling facts to an audience in a natural way, which an aside told them so easily, is a matter of no small difficulty. For example, the use of the concealed door in Mr. Goodrich's version—of having Huguet listen at a door which Richelieu had told Joseph a few moments before Huguet knew nothing of—is a visual, natural way of telling the audience what asides told them in the old play. And Baradas' flamboyant soliloquy at the end of Act I, Scene I, becomes now shrewd and half humorous in Mr. Goodrich's treatment.

Another striking evidence of the change in dramatic construction and method is worth calling attention to. Bulwer in 1839 told you, often all too casually, of things that happened off stage. Goodrich in 1929 shows you these things happening. You see Mauprat give the packet to Huguet. You see Marion sent away by Baradas. You see Beringhen sent for the despatch to the Bastille, and, later, you see François trailing him. Here again is the contrast between plays written for an ear-minded audience and an eye-minded audience. And there can be little doubt that the 1929 method brings more acute dramatic effects.

I feel that Mr. Goodrich has humanized many of the lesser characters, as well as deepened the reality of the Cardinal himself. Julie, whom the great Modjeska called "a ninny," is almost believable now in her greater simplicity. Beringhen's humor has been heightened

and Baradas is far less the gloating "heavy" and more the canny, adventurous courtier, taking a half-humorous, if heartless, fling at fortune. Marion has become a much more vital character in this play, and Mauprat a more credible and sympathetic hero.

There are, also, sharply dramatic new scenes in this Richelieu—scenes which Bulwer forgot to write. The "blank and empty page" passage by which Richelieu takes the whip hand near the end of the play, and the scene in which Marion braves Baradas earlier, are two that I remember in particular. And, of the old scenes themselves, it will be extremely interesting to any student of the drama to compare, line for line and situation for situation, the Mauprat house scenes in the two plays, and to see how a wholly new scene has been born of the old one. Interesting, too, to notice that a six-line paraphrase of a long speech in Act II, Scene II has become the last speech of the play. And a line of Beringhen's in the first garden scene is now Richelieu's curtain line in the murder scene.

Not the least difficult phase of Mr. Goodrich's task —and one which might easily be overlooked—was to keep, in the midst of kaleidoscopic changes, the basic vitality of the old play, the shrewd building of its plot, the best passages of Bulwer's verse. Lord Lytton wrote in "Richelieu" one of the really noteworthy plays of the English stage, and, with all his drastic revision, Mr. Goodrich has approached the play with such respect and appreciation that the casual listener in the theater will scarcely be conscious of all the alterations,

and will have a renewed gratitude to Bulwer for having conceived and written his Richelieu.

Mr. Goodrich would be the last to claim that his version is better—in any absolute sense—than Lord Lytton's famous play. I have tried merely to indicate the many-sided delicacy and magnitude of his task. That he has succeeded in bringing to new life a play which of itself was dead for our stage, and in making possible Mr. Hampden's enormously effective characterization of the Cardinal, is, everything else aside, a fine and worthy achievement.

CLAYTON HAMILTON

THE CAST

As Directed by Mr. Goodrich and Mr. Hampden
at Hampden's Theatre, New York

Gaston, Duke of Orleans	*Louis Polan*
Count de Baradas	*Moffat Johnston*
Clermont	*S. Thomas Gomez*
Marion de Lorme	*Evelyn Goodrich*
Sieur de Beringhen	*Gordon Hart*
Chevalier de Mauprat	*Ernest Rowan*
First Gamester	*Clark Hundley*
Huguet	*C. Norman Hammond*
Francois	*Charles McCarthy, Jr.*
Joseph	*Cecil Yapp*
Cardinal Richelieu	*Walter Hampden*
Julie de Mortemar	*Ingeborg Torrup*
One of the Twenty	*Edwin Cushman*
Another of the Twenty	*Gage Bennett*
Duran	*Robert C. Schnitzer*
Louis XIII	*Dallas Anderson*
First Guard	*Steven Irving*
Second Guard	*Harold Williams*
First Secretary of State	*Edwin Cushman*
Second Secretary of State	*Gage Bennett*
Third Secretary of State	*Franklin Salisbury*

Courtiers, Gamesters, Soldiers, Conspirators, Ladies of the Court, etc.

THE SCENES

Act I. *Scene* 1. At the house of Marion de Lorme.

Scene 2. At Cardinal Richelieu's Palace. Later the same day.

Act II. *Scene* 1. At Adrien de Mauprat's house. Afternoon of the next day.

Scene 2. At Cardinal Richelieu's Palace. Later the same day.

Scene 3. Same as preceding scene. Shortly after midnight.

Act III. *Scene* 1. At the house of Marion de Lorme. An hour later.

Scene 2. The Gardens of the Louvre. Ten o'clock that morning.

Scene 3. Same as preceding scene. An hour later.

RICHELIEU

ACT ONE

Scene I

A room in the house of Marion de Lorme. It is shallow and heavily curtained. A door at left leads in from a hallway which communicates with the street, and another at right opens into an inner room.

There is a heavy table at center upon which are wine and food. Three chairs group about it, one particularly large and ornate, and two more chairs are pushed against the wall at back.

At the rise of the curtain Prince Orleans, Count Baradas, Marion *herself,* Clermont, Duran, *and two unnamed Courtiers are gathered about the table, and* Marion *is gayly handing a goblet of wine to* Orleans *who, in the large chair, is the only one seated.*

From off stage at right can be heard the sound of noisy laughter and the rattle of dice.

ORLEANS

Here's to our enterprise!

BARADAS

Hush, sir!

ORLEANS

No, Count.
You may trust her. She dotes on me. No house
So safe as Marion's.

BARADAS

We all agree.
And yet—

CLERMONT

Affairs of state!

MARION

Let me retire,
My lord.

VOICE

[*From off R.*]
Again he loses!

ORLEANS

Go and see
Who always loses. Must be kin of mine.
[*Exit* MARION *R.*]
Of course one doubts a wife, but things are sad,
Count Baradas, if one must come to doubt
One's mistress—

BARADAS

This, our secret, must be kept
In whisper and on tiptoe, till the hour

We strike. Since our last conference I have drawn
All the conditions—see, 'tis here—by which
Bouillon's great army joins with that of Spain,
Marches on Paris and dethrones the King.
You will be regent. I, and you, my lords,
Form the new council.

ORLEANS

What of Richelieu?

BARADAS

Well, what of him?

ORLEANS

I fear him.

BARADAS

So do I.

So do we all. So did we all agree
That he must die. While this, signed by us all,
Is swift dispatched to Bouillon, Richelieu
Is swift dispatched to heaven.

ORLEANS

Easy said.

BARADAS

And easy done. Leave that to me, my lord.

ORLEANS

Most willingly.

BARADAS

I'll find some desperate hand.
His enemies are many. We shall meet
To-morrow, midnight, here. To sign this scroll,
And send it off to Bouillon.

THE OTHERS

Yes, my lord.

BARADAS

And you, our Prince, meanwhile you will, perchance,
Select some honest knave to carry it.

ORLEANS

Some *honest* knave! Some *worthy* villain! Yes,
I'll seek one out. Come, friends.
[*Calling.*]
Oh, Marion!

VOICES

[*From off R.*]
Vive Orleans!

ORLEANS

[*Calling as* MARION *enters.*]
All my thanks. To-morrow then
At midnight, Baradas.

MARION

You're going, sir?

ORLEANS

Oh, I'll be back to see my Marion.

[*They exeunt,* COURTIERS *following, all except* CLERMONT, *who delays at* BARADAS' *signal.*]

BARADAS

De Mauprat?

CLERMONT

[*Pointing R.*]
He's within.

BARADAS

I know. What news?

CLERMONT

I've tested him. Say to him "Richelieu"—
He changes color, bites his nether lip.
When he's most happy, whisper "Richelieu"
And you cloud all his sunshine.

BARADAS

As I thought.
I'll find out why. If he could be my man!

CLERMONT

I said "when he's most happy." Could you guess
What time De Mauprat's happiest?

BARADAS

Would it
Were never!

CLERMONT

This will interest you.

BARADAS

Well?

CLERMONT

'Tis when he sees a certain lady.

BARADAS

Who?

CLERMONT

The lovely ward of Richelieu himself,
Julie de Mortemar.

BARADAS

Julie! And she?

CLERMONT

She walks where he may see her—blushes—

BARADAS

No!

CLERMONT

Eyes him in turn with maiden shyness.

BARADAS

Hush!

[*Enter from R.* DE BERINGHEN, *two or three* GAMESTERS, *all laughing, followed by* DE MAUPRAT.]

MAUPRAT

Come, one throw more, De Beringhen. One more!

BERINGHEN

Always one more. The man's persistent. Done!

MAUPRAT

[*Crossing to table.*]
Double the stakes.

BERINGHEN

Why not? Yet I'm ashamed
To bleed a purse already in extremis.
[*Throws dice.*]

MAUPRAT

But as you've had the patient to yourself
So long, no other doctor should dispatch it.
[*He throws, and loses.*]
The devil's in the dice!

GAMESTERS

He's lost once more.

MAUPRAT

Who cares?

GAMESTERS

Oh, poor De Mauprat!

MAUPRAT

Poor, indeed!

BERINGHEN

Again?

MAUPRAT

No. There goes all I have, except
My honor and my sword.

IST GAMESTER

Go, take the sword

To Cardinal Richelieu. He gives gold for steel
When borne by brave men.

MAUPRAT

Richelieu!

CLERMONT

[*To* BARADAS.]

My lord!

MAUPRAT

[*Pouring wine.*]
Look—wine is plenty. Cleopatra once
Dissolved her richest jewel in a draught.
Would I could so melt time and all its treasures,
And drain it thus!
[*Drinks.*]

BERINGHEN

Come, gentlemen, we'll walk
On the parade.

MAUPRAT

Not me.

OTHERS

De Mauprat! Come!

MAUPRAT

No, thanks, I shall remain beside the wine.

BARADAS

I'll stay and comfort Mauprat.

BERINGHEN

Comfort! When
We gallant fellows have run *out* a friend
There's little left except to run him *through.*
There's the last act of friendship.

MAUPRAT

Let me keep
That favor in reserve. In all beside—
Your most obedient servant.
[*Exit* DE BERINGHEN *and* GAMESTERS, *L.*]

BARADAS

[*To* CLERMONT.]

Wait for me
Within.
[*Exit* CLERMONT *R.*]
Well, friend De Mauprat, you have lost;
Yet are not sad.

MAUPRAT

Sad! Life and gold have wings—
Must fly some day. So open wide the cage door
And wish them merry.

BARADAS

You're an enigma—brave,
Reckless in war, yet caring naught for glory.
All mirth in action. In repose, all gloom.
There's something back of this.

MAUPRAT

And—if there is?

BARADAS

Fortune of late has parted us, and led
Me to be courtier, count and favorite;
You to be called the wildest, gayest gallant
And bravest knight in France. You're not content.
Come, trust me. I have power—might help you much.

MAUPRAT

All friends are good. Old friends are best. Your hand.
I've longed to share this thing with some one.

BARADAS

Well?

MAUPRAT

By Orleans led, hating the Cardinal,
You know I joined the Languedoc revolt—
Was captured—sent to the Bastille—

BARADAS

You shared
The general pardon which the Duke of Orleans
Won for himself and all in the revolt
Who but obeyed his orders.

MAUPRAT

Note that phrase:
"Obeyed his orders." Well, when on my way
To join the Duke in Languedoc (I then
More boy than man, the down upon my lip)
Leading young valors, reckless as myself,
Seized on the town of Faviaux and displaced

The royal banners for the rebel. Orleans
(Never too daring) when I reached the camp
Blamed me for acting—mark—*without* his orders.
Upon this quibble Richelieu razed my name
Out of the general pardon.

BARADAS

He released you
From the Bastille—

MAUPRAT

Only to summon me
Alone, and tell me—I had seized a town
Of France, without the orders of my leader.
This being treason, but one sentence—death!

BARADAS

And yet you live!

MAUPRAT

He had pity on my youth,
And birth, he said, and wished me spared of shame,
Commanded that I join my troop at once,
Then on the march against the Spaniards—change
The traitor's scaffold for the soldier's grave.
My memory should be stainless, since my King
Knew nothing, nor should ever know my crime.

BARADAS

Oh, tender pity!

MAUPRAT

Well, I joined my troop.
I did my best.

BARADAS

France echoed with the tales
Of your mad daring.

MAUPRAT

But I could not die;
Came through unscathed. So when the Cardinal
Reviewed the troops, his eye met mine. He frowned,
Summoned me forth. "How's this?" said he. "You've shunned
The sword. Beware the axe! 'Twill fall one day."
Next day we were recalled to Paris, I
Ever o'erhung with death—grim death. No one
Knows this but Richelieu and me—now you.

BARADAS

Then why not join to rid yourself and France
Of this o'ershadowing tyrant?

MAUPRAT

Richelieu?

BARADAS

The King himself detests the Cardinal,
Dares not disgrace, but groans to be delivered
Of that too great a subject.

MAUPRAT

Richelieu
Bears a charmed life.

BARADAS

Yet if he dies, you live.
And if he lives—you die.

MAUPRAT

Better the victim
Than the assassin. France can spare a man
Like Mauprat; needs its Richelieu. Yet I
Would wish to live—win fame, success—

BARADAS

And love?

MAUPRAT

Love? I am young—

BARADAS

And Julie fair?

MAUPRAT

Julie!
How guessed you that?

BARADAS

Then it is true!

MAUPRAT

Alas,
Now you know both my secrets. Guard them well.
I must forget them or go mad. Come, Count,
While life is here, let's live it to the full.
Your health! The gardens beckon us by day.
At night the taverns in their turn. No more

Of somber hopelessness. All's hope and joy.
I'm a true Frenchman. Vive la bagatelle!
[*Enter L.* HUGUET *and two soldiers of the* CARDINAL'S *guard.*]

HUGUET

Messire de Mauprat, I arrest you. Follow
To the Lord Cardinal.
[*Enter* CLEMONT *R.*]

MAUPRAT

You see, my friend,
I'm out of my suspense. The tiger has played
Long enough with his prey. The moment comes
I've waited for so long. I welcome it.
Death? Well, who cares?

BARADAS

Do not despair. Remember—
Whatever others be—*I* am your friend.
Farewell.
[DE MAUPRAT *exit L. with* HUGUET *and soldiers.*]
[*To* CLERMONT.]
I hope, forever.

CLERMONT

But your plan?

BARADAS

No, let him go, if this can be his end.
In childhood he was stronger, won my hate.

In youth, far fairer—and I hated still.
And now, in love with Julie, hated most.

CLERMONT

More than you hate the Cardinal?

BARADAS

[*Sitting by table.*]

No hate
Can conquer that. But wait. By the King's aid
I will be Julie's husband—in despite
Of my Lord Cardinal. By the King's aid
I will be Minister of France—in spite
Of my Lord Cardinal. And then—what then?
The King loves Julie too—weak prince, false master!
Then by the aid of Bouillon and the Spaniards
We will dethrone the King, and all, my friend,
All in despite of my Lord Cardinal!
[*Laughs with* CLERMONT.]

CURTAIN

SCENE II

A room in the CARDINAL'S *Palace, later the same afternoon. A large, dark-panelled but mellow room, with a curtained recess at back, raised a few steps above the floor of the main room. Coming in from the street you would eventually enter this room at left,*

while a door at right, partly obscured by a movable screen, leads off to the "tapestry room." The CARDINAL'S *closet is off the recess at right.*

RICHELIEU'S *heavy table-desk stands near the wall just back of the door to the tapestry room, and has for a background, in the right back corner of the room, a huge fireplace, flanked on the walls with swords, pistols, carbines and pieces of armor from* RICHELIEU'S *campaigns. Opposite the fireplace, slanting across the left back corner, is a high and heavy piece, open below but with cupboards above supported by carved uprights. At the back, below these cupboards, we are to find out later, is a concealed door in the panel of the wall. In the raised recess at back, a couch stretches along the back wall, with a small table at its head.*

At the rise of the curtain FRANCOIS *is arranging papers at* RICHELIEU'S *desk, and almost at once* JOSEPH *comes hurrying in from left. The curtains shutting off the recess at back are closed.*

JOSEPH

His Eminence?

FRANCOIS

The tapestry room beyond,
He said he would be there.

JOSEPH

He said so? Then

He is not there. You're sure he did not go
Outside?

FRANCOIS

He said he'd stay within.

JOSEPH

Enough,
Then he is out. Remember this, young sir.
He is ever where he says he will not be,
So makes it difficult for enemies,
More difficult for friends. See, here am I,
With rumors of a new conspiracy
Far craftier than any planned before
Against his power. And hours will pass. A day,
Perhaps, ere I can tell him of this trap
They've laid for him they call the Old Fox—

[*Curtains at back part and* RICHELIEU *stands at the top of the stairs in the recess.*]

RICHELIEU

Joseph!

[*To* FRANCOIS.]
Go, leave us, boy.
[FRANCOIS *exit L.*]
Joseph, you are far too frank—
Behind my back! And now so silent! Well—
And so you think some new conspiracy
The craftiest trap yet laid for the *Old Fox*—

JOSEPH

I meant—

RICHELIEU

I like the nickname. What did Plutarch
Say of the Greek Lysander?

JOSEPH

I forget.

RICHELIEU

That when the lion's skin fell short, he eked it
Out with the fox's. A great statesman, Joseph,
That same Lysander!

JOSEPH

Orleans heads the traitors.

RICHELIEU

A very wooden head then. Well?

JOSEPH

The favorite,
Count Baradas—

RICHELIEU

A weed of hasty growth.
First gentleman of the chamber, titles, lands,
And the King's ear. It cost me six long years
To mount as high as in six little months
This painted lizard—! But I hold the ladder
And when I shake, he falls. What more?

JOSEPH

A scheme
To make your orphan ward an instrument
To aid your foes.

RICHELIEU

Julie! But in what way
Can they use her?

JOSEPH

You placed her with the Queen,
One of the royal chamber—as a watch
In the enemy's quarters.

RICHELIEU

And the silly child
Visits me daily—calls me father—prays
Kind heaven to bless me. And for all the rest
As well have placed a doll about the Queen.
She does not heed who frowns, who smiles, with whom
The King confers in whispers—notes not when
Men who were foes, to-day are found in corners
Mysteriously friendly. Words soft spoken
Behind closed doors she never hears—by chance
Taking the air at keyholes. She's all charm.
But ears? No. Eyes? No. Yet she says she loves me.
Go on.

JOSEPH

Your ward has charmed the King.

RICHELIEU

Poor Julie!
She needs protection then. So is our King
Philandering again? I spend full half
My time checking his infidelities.
They're sinful too, these passions of the flesh.
The church condemns them. And to us, my Joseph,
The props and pillars of the church, most hurtful.
The King is weak. Whoever the King loves
Will rule the King. The lady loves another.
The other rules the lady. Thus we are balked
Of our own proper sway. The King must love
No mistress but the State. The State—that's Richelieu!

JOSEPH

This not the worst. Louis, in all decorous,
Would veil his suit to Julie . . .

RICHELIEU

How?

JOSEPH

By marriage.

RICHELIEU

Marriage? With whom?

JOSEPH

Count Baradas.

RICHELIEU

Indeed?
No, I've another bride for Baradas.

JOSEPH

You, my lord?

RICHELIEU

Yes. More faithful than the love
Of fickle woman. She's a bit austere
For Baradas. He would not choose her. No.
Her marriage bed is warm and very deep.

JOSEPH

An earthy bed—!
[*Enter* FRANCOIS *L.*]

FRANCOIS

My Lord, the lady Julie.

RICHELIEU

Most opportune. Admit her.
[*Exit* FRANCOIS *L.*]
We shall see
How far the King and Baradas have nudged
Their joint, decorous way into her heart.
Good Joseph. Good? I wonder. In my closet
You'll find a rosary. Before you tell
Three hundred beads I'll summon you. No. Wait.
I did omit an Ave in my Matins.
A grievous fault. Atone it for me, Joseph.
Within you'll find a scourge. I'm weak, you strong.
It were but charity to take my sin
On your broad shoulders.

JOSEPH

Take your place, my Lord!
That were presumption!

RICHELIEU

Exercise is healthful!
[*Exit* JOSEPH *B.*]
[*Enter* JULIE *L.*]
How's my sweet Julie?

JULIE

Are you gracious, Sir?
May I say Father?

RICHELIEU

Yes. No other name
While Richelieu lives. Your father was my friend
Ere I had flatterers. Now I am great
I'm friendless. Julie, I have plans for you.
Your marriage, for example. You shall have
A mate among the mightiest. What? No smiles?
Instead, a sigh so deep and wistful! Come,
Are you not happy at the Court?

JULIE

Not often.

RICHELIEU

Does not the King himself commend your beauty,
And bid you sing to him?

JULIE

He's very tiresome,
Our worthy King.

RICHELIEU

No. Kings are never tiresome
Save to their ministers. But—of the rest?
De Sourdiac? Longueville? Or—Baradas?

JULIE

A smileless man. I fear and shun him.

RICHELIEU

So?
I'll wager he is most devoted—

JULIE

Then
He is more tiresome than His Majesty.

RICHELIEU

Instinctive woman wisdom! You are right.
Shun Baradas. But of these flowers of France
Is none at Court to make you blush and pale
All in a breath?
[*Enter* HUGUET.]
Well, Huguet?

HUGUET

The Chevalier
De Mauprat is below.

JULIE

De Mauprat!

RICHELIEU

Ah!

He has been tiresome, too.
[*To* HUGUET.]

Delay awhile.

[*Exit* HUGUET.]

JULIE

Why comes he here?—I should not ask—I mean—
You know Messire de Mauprat?

RICHELIEU

Well. And you?

Has he addressed you often?

JULIE

Often? No.
Nine times, no, ten—the last time by the lattice
Of the great staircase. He's at Court but seldom.

RICHELIEU

A bold and forward royster?

JULIE

He? No. Modest.

RICHELIEU

Modest? Does he not dress in gold and azure?

JULIE

No. Sable.

RICHELIEU

So you note his colors, do you?
He's not for you. Look loftier. By the mass,
I have business with this modest gentleman.

JULIE

You're angry with me—without cause.

RICHELIEU

No cause?
I'd have you hate my foes.

JULIE

I do.

RICHELIEU

Hate Mauprat.

JULIE

Not Mauprat. No, not Adrien, father.

RICHELIEU

Adrien!
Familiar! Go, child. No, not that way. Wait
In the tapestry chamber. I will join you. Go.

JULIE

My father!

RICHELIEU

Well?

JULIE

You cannot know him. He
Would die for you and France.

RICHELIEU

He doubtless will.

JULIE

Oh, do not rank De Mauprat with your foes.

RICHELIEU

If he be not, I will not rank him so.

JULIE

I know that he is loyal—

RICHELIEU

Go now.

[*Exit* JULIE *R.*]

Huguet!

[*Enter* HUGUET *L.*]
De Mauprat—did he struggle, threaten?

HUGUET

No.

Silent and proud.

RICHELIEU

Let him come in, but first
Look that he hide no weapon, since despair
Sometimes makes victims victors. Once within,
Secrete yourself behind that screen, and watch him.

If he show violence— Let me see your carbine.
So—a good weapon. If he play the lion
Then the dog's death.

HUGUET

I never miss, my lord.

[*Exit L.*]

[RICHELIEU *crosses to R., arranges screen, then crosses to desk and sits. Enter* DE MAUPRAT *from L.,* HUGUET *following.*]

RICHELIEU

[*After* HUGUET, *at his signal, has crossed to right and has seemed to exit R., hid by the screen.*]
Approach, sir. Can you call to mind the hour,
Now three years gone, when in this very room
Your presence honored me?

MAUPRAT

It is, my lord,
One of my most—

RICHELIEU

Delightful recollections?

MAUPRAT

My lord, do you then make a jest of axe
And headsman?

RICHELIEU

I accorded you that day
A mercy ill requited . . . you still live.

MAUPRAT

To meet death face to face at last.

RICHELIEU

Your words

Are bold.

MAUPRAT

My deeds have not belied them.

RICHELIEU

Deeds!

And how, Messire de Mauprat, have you lived?
Doomed to sure death, how have you since consumed
The time allotted you for serious thought
And solemn penitence?

MAUPRAT

How spent my time?

RICHELIEU

Is not the question plain? I'll answer for you.
You've sought nor priest nor shrine. No sackcloth chafed
Your flesh. What you have *not* done—all too brief
The tale! What done—a volume! Wild debauch.
Turbulent riot. For the morn the dice box.
Duel at noon. At night the drinking bout.
These your most holy, pure preparatives
For death and judgment. Do I wrong you, sir?

MAUPRAT

No. All you say is true. But think, my lord,

Were you accursed with that which you inflicted,
By bed and board dogged by one ghastly spectre,
The while within you youth beat high, and life
Grew lovelier from the neighboring frown of death,
You might have erred like me.

RICHELIEU

I might, like you,
Have been a brawler and a reveler—not
Like you a trickster and a thief.

MAUPRAT

I will
Not tolerate—!

[HUGUET, *his carbine leveled, steps from behind the screen, as* MAUPRAT *starts angrily toward* RICHELIEU.]

RICHELIEU

Not quite so quick, friend Huguet.
Messire de Mauprat is a patient man
And he can wait.

[*To* DE MAUPRAT *as* HUGUET *retires.*]

You have outrun your fortune.
I blame you not that you would be a beggar.
Each to his taste! But I do charge you, sir,
That, being beggared, you dance on to debt.
You live on means not yours, are brave in silks,
Gallant in steeds, splendid in banquets—all
Not yours—ungiven, unherited, unpaid for.
This is to be a trickster, and to borrow

From other men, quitting all scores with "Friend,
You're troublesome" . . . why this, forgive me, sir,
Is what—when done with a less dainty grace—
Plain folks call theft. You owe eight thousand pistoles
Minus one crown, two liards.

MAUPRAT

Quite correct.
Perhaps you will tell me next how many cups
I drank at dinner.

RICHELIEU

This is scandal, sir.
I tell you, you must pay your debts.

MAUPRAT

With all
My heart. Where shall I borrow, then, the money?

RICHELIEU

Excellent! You have humor—daring, too.
I have a use for you.

MAUPRAT

For me, my lord?

RICHELIEU

Adrien de Mauprat, men have called me cruel.
I am not. I am just. I found France rent asunder,
Brawls festering to rebellion and weak laws
Rotting away with rust in antique sheaths.

I have recreated France. What was my art?
Genius, some say. Some, fortune. Witchcraft, some.
Not so. My art was justice, testing first
As I have tested you. You shall not die.
France needs you. No. You shall be rich, be honored,
Be great. I ask, sir, in return, your hand
To gift it with a bride whose means shall match,
Yet not exceed, her beauty.

MAUPRAT

I, my lord—
I have no wish to marry.

RICHELIEU

Surely, sir,
To die were worse.

MAUPRAT

Scarcely. The poorest coward
Must die. But knowingly to march to marriage!
My lord, it asks the courage of a lion.

RICHELIEU

Think you to trifle with me? I know all.
You dared to love Julie, my ward—

MAUPRAT

As rivers
May love the sun, gain blessing from its beams
And hurry on.

RICHELIEU

You told her of your love?

MAUPRAT

If I had loved the lowliest of maids
Could I have asked that she should link her life
With one, like me, shadowed by certain death?
And Julie— No, I told her nothing, sir.

RICHELIEU

Then, since she knows not of your love, renounce her.
Take life and fortune with another. Silent?

MAUPRAT

Your fate has been one triumph. You know not
How blest a thing it was in my dark hours
To nurse the one sweet thought you bid me banish.
You say I am to live. Life matters little
If it be robbed of this one brightest hope.
Revoke your mercy. I prefer the death
I looked for.

RICHELIEU

[*Calls.*]

Huguet! To the tapestry chamber
Conduct your prisoner.
[*To* MAUPRAT.]

You will there behold
Your executioner—your doom be private—
And heaven have mercy on you.

MAUPRAT

When I'm dead
Tell her I loved her.
[*Exit R. with* HUGUET]

RICHELIEU

Joseph! Come forth, and quickly.

[*Enter* JOSEPH *B.*]

It seems your cheek has lost its rosy color.
I fear you have been too lavish of the flesh.
The scourge is heavy.

JOSEPH

Pray you, change the subject.

RICHELIEU

You good men are so modest! Well, to business.
Go instantly—deeds—notaries! Bid my stewards
Prepare my house by the Luxembourg—*my* house
No more. A bridal present to my ward
Who weds to-morrow.

JOSEPH

Weds? With whom?

RICHELIEU

De Mauprat.

JOSEPH

Penniless husband!

RICHELIEU

Bah! The mate for beauty
Should be a man and not a money chest.
That night her father lay on his deathbed
I pledged I would be father to this girl.
And so he died, a smile upon his lips.

And when I spared the life of her young lover
I thought I saw him smile again. Who else
So well as Mauprat at the Court . . . who else
Brave Baradas and balk the King with Julie,
Baffle their schemes? Though he's not over shrewd
And might through indiscretion play the fool,
Yet he has honor, courage . . . qualities
That eagle-plume men's souls. And he has taste!
Why, when my play was acted to dull gapers
Who had no soul for poetry, I saw him
Applaud in the proper places. He is, Joseph,
A man of most uncommon promise.

JOSEPH

But
He is your foe.

RICHELIEU

Have I not foes enough?
Great men gain doubly when they make foes friends.
Remember my grand maxims. First employ
All methods to conciliate—

JOSEPH

But if
Conciliation fails?

RICHELIEU

All means to crush,
As with this opening and clenching hand
I, Armand Richelieu, will crush to dust
Count Baradas and all his courtier crew!

Enough of threats and soiling intrigue. See—
The last great act of my great play.

JOSEPH

Five acts!

RICHELIEU

Yes, five—the last the best. Ah, wonderful!
Laws die, books never. Of my ministry
I am not vain, but of my poetry—!

JOSEPH

[*Turning away, to himself.*]
Worse than the scourge!

RICHELIEU

What did you say, my Joseph?

JOSEPH

I said your verse has epic surge!

RICHELIEU

Sometime
I'll read you this. Why look you so distressed?

JOSEPH

Regret, my lord, that joys must be postponed.

RICHELIEU

You rogue! Some day you'll slip and tell the truth.
[*Enter from R.* MAUPRAT *and* JULIE.]

MAUPRAT

Lord Cardinal, I dare not think you mock me.

RICHELIEU

One moment please, this line must be considered.

JULIE

But we must know!

RICHELIEU

This couplet—it's sublime!

[*Looks up.*]

What's this? Do you still live, sir?

MAUPRAT

No, my lord.

For heaven is not life.

JULIE

He smiles. You smile,

My father! From my heart forever I

Erase the name of orphan.

RICHELIEU

Rise, my children,

For you are mine—mine both—and in your sweet

And young delight—your love—life's first-born glory—

My own lost youth breathes musical.

MAUPRAT

I'll seek

Temple and priest henceforward—to say thanks

Forever for our happiness.

RICHELIEU

You'll seek
Temple and priest right soon. To-morrow's sun
Shall see across this barren threshold pass
The fairest bride in Paris. Go, my children.
Even I loved once. Be lovers while you may.
How is it with you, sir? You bear it bravely.
You said it asks the courage of a lion!
[*Exeunt* MAUPRAT *and* JULIE, *L.*]
Oh, godlike power! Woe, rapture, penury, wealth,
Marriage and death—for one infirm old man
Through a great empire to dispense, withhold
As the will whispers . . . will which must not weaken,
Else will these lackeys, starvelings, manikins
Of Louis' Court cast careless lots to choose
Who claims my robes, my sceptre and my power.
And France, sweet France, my France, suffer and wane.
What, Joseph, you're not gone? The house—the deeds—
The notaries! All preparations swift
And silent make for this surprising wedding.
By it we baffle Baradas.

JOSEPH

And when
Check the conspiracy?

RICHELIEU

Check? Check? Full way to it!
Let it bud, ripen, flaunt in the day, and burst

To fruit—the Dead Sea's fruit of ashes. Ashes
Which I shall scatter to the winds—!
[*Exit* JOSEPH.]
[RICHELIEU'S *enthusiasm fades. He stands pondering.*]
Perhaps!

CURTAIN

ACT TWO

SCENE I

A room in MAUPRAT'S *suddenly acquired new home. It is a shallow room, with panelled walls, which slants across from right to left, making its depth at left considerably greater than at right. Through glass doors at left you have a glimpse of the gardens. The main entrance, however, is at center back, from an outer hallway; and a door at right leads off to an inner room of the house. Tapestried chairs, a divan along the back wall and a small table are all the furnishings you see, in this portion of the room in which the action takes place.*

At the rise of the curtain, the room is empty, but almost at once BARADAS *and* CLERMONT *come in at back, obviously fresh from the street.*

BARADAS

Mauprat's new home. Too splendid for a soldier.

CLERMONT

A sudden change from yesterday, my lord.

BARADAS

He is but a pawn. The game has just begun.

Great Richelieu has moved him hither. Now
The move is mine. This marriage makes the King
De Mauprat's foe. And though De Mauprat's married,
He is not wived.
[*He has crossed to L. and is looking off.*]
Yes, she is in the garden.
Meanwhile he sulks somewhere within, rereads
My order from the King—

MAUPRAT

[*Calling from off R.*]
Oh, Baradas!

BARADAS

Go, Clermont, have the carriage at the door
In just ten minutes' time.

CLERMONT

I'll not be late.

[*Exit B.*]

BARADAS

[*Calling.*]
Here, Mauprat.
[*Enter* MAUPRAT *R.*]

MAUPRAT

Baradas, my friend! This house,
So huge and unaccustomed I was lost
Seeking to find this room. Lost, did I say?
Yes, I am lost, indeed.

BARADAS

What, frowns and gloom!
Fie, what a brow, man, for your wedding day!

MAUPRAT

My wedding day! You had a note from me
This morning?

BARADAS

Yes, it told the miracle—
Your interview with Richelieu, its strange
And stirring sequence, pardon—marriage—joy—
Success—all yours as by a magic wand.
My friend, how I rejoice!

MAUPRAT

Yes, we were wed
At noon—the rites performed, came hither—scarce
Arrived when—

BARADAS

Well?

MAUPRAT

Wide open flew the door—
Messire de Beringhen, and this epistle.

BARADAS

'Tis the King's hand—the royal seal!

MAUPRAT

Read it.
I've read, reread and cannot fathom it.

BARADAS

[*Reading aloud from letter.*]

Whereas, Adrien de Mauprat, Colonel and Chevalier in our armies, being already guilty of high treason, by the seizure of our town of Faviaux, has presumed to connect himself by marriage with Julie de Mortemar, a wealthy orphan attached to the person of Her Majesty—we do proclaim the said marriage contrary to law. On penalty of death, Adrien de Mauprat will not communicate with the said Julie de Mortemar, save in the presence of our faithful servant, the Sieur de Beringhen, and then with such respect and decorum as are due to a Demoiselle attached to the Court of France; until it may suit our royal pleasure to confer with the Holy Church on the formal annulment of the marriage, and with our Council on the punishment to be awarded to Messire de Mauprat, who is cautioned for his own sake to preserve silence as to our injunction, more especially to Mademoiselle de Mortemar—

MAUPRAT

[*Breaking in.*]

I must not tell her this, nor speak to her
Of all my love, nor touch her hand. It is
Our wedding day!

BARADAS

De Beringhen is here?

MAUPRAT

Outside with her. He clings to her. Or me.

Or both. Till I could send his scented soul
With one glad thrust to hell!

BARADAS

How came the King
To know of what you did at Faviaux?

MAUPRAT

I cannot guess. In this mad muddle I
Have ceased to think.

BARADAS

Who was the only one
Who knew your crime?

MAUPRAT

The Cardinal! You mean—

BARADAS

Perhaps his miracle was but a snare,
A vengeance worse than death.

MAUPRAT

I'll go to him.
I'll face him—

BARADAS

Wait!

MAUPRAT

But what can be his aim?

BARADAS

I think I see.

MAUPRAT

Speak out.

BARADAS

Hush, hush. Your wife—
De Beringhen. Listen to me. Obey
The royal orders to the letter, since
De Beringhen must watch your wife and you,
Report each word, each gesture to the King.
I'll wait for you within—
[*Enter* JULIE *and* BERINGHEN *L.*]
Madame de Mauprat,
I am most happy in your happiness.
[*Exit R.*]

JULIE

Madame de Mauprat! What a thrilling sound
That name has! Adrien!

MAUPRAT

[*As* BERINGHEN *coughs.*]
Yes, yes, the name
Is excellent.

JULIE

Dearest, you look so worn.
You are not ill?

MAUPRAT

No, no.

JULIE

Where have you been?

MAUPRAT

Oh, just about the palace.

JULIE

I, meanwhile,
So lonely, lacking you.

MAUPRAT

My own!

BERINGHEN

Sir?

MAUPRAT

Oh!
Of course—I mean—the palace is my own.

JULIE

You seem so strange. Do you not love me?

MAUPRAT

Yes.
I love you!

BERINGHEN

Sir, dear sir.

MAUPRAT

I mean, of course,
As gentlemen all love a lovely woman.

JULIE

Married two hours ago, you say but that!
Messire de Beringhen, I dropped my glove
In the gardens by the fountain. Would you please
Go fetch it?

BERINGHEN

Oh, most happily. But no.
I'd make your husband jealous. He's the one
To fetch your glove.

MAUPRAT

I'll go.

JULIE

I will go with you.

BERINGHEN

I hate to be alone; I'll join you.

JULIE

[*Angrily.*]

Oh!

MAUPRAT

You do not understand. I can't explain.
Trust me, that I know best.

JULIE

Oh, Adrien!

MAUPRAT

I am busy—letters—visitors— Please go.

I've things too, to discuss—important things
With this too omnipresent gentleman.

JULIE

I'll go! It was to own a palace, then,
To hold high place, and thereby to discuss
Important things—for these you married me.
I thought you loved me.
[*Exit B.*]

MAUPRAT

Julie!

BERINGHEN

Sir, dear sir!

MAUPRAT

Were you not here by orders of the King
You'd be the most officious, impudent
Damned busybody ever interfering
In a man's family affairs.

BERINGHEN

But since
I do belong, sir, to His Majesty?

MAUPRAT

You're lucky. Still were we a story higher
'Twere prudent not to go too near a window.
When is this farce to end?

BERINGHEN

Oh, when you please.

Should you infringe too much the King's command
I must arrest you instantly, take you
To the Bastille. I hope you'll spare me that.

MAUPRAT

Is Julie being spared? Am I? Oh, if
The Church and Council by this hour to-morrow
One way or other settle not this matter
I will—

BERINGHEN

What, my dear sir?

MAUPRAT

Show you the door,
My dear, dear sir. Talk as I please, with whom
I please in my own house, dear sir, until
His Majesty shall condescend to find
A stouter gentleman than you, dear sir,
To take me out. And now, you understand,
My dear, most dear—oh damnably dear sir!

BERINGHEN

What! Almost in a passion. I'll withdraw.
I'm hungry. No, I'll help myself. Don't stir.
I'll try your Burgundy—and drink your health.
No, no, don't come. I'll make myself at home.
[*Exits quickly, B.*]

MAUPRAT

[*Calling off.*]
Baradas!

BARADAS

[*Answers off stage L.*]
Yes!
[*He enters.*]
Your house—magnificent!

MAUPRAT

Oh, curses on the house! You spoke of snares—
A vengeance worse than death. Explain.

BARADAS

I'm loath
To tell you. Yet—my duty as your friend—

MAUPRAT

Go on.

BARADAS

'Tis all too clear. Our Richelieu
Has but two passions.

MAUPRAT

Richelieu!

BARADAS

And both
You satisfy. Ambition and revenge.
First his ambition. Julie is his ward.
He placed her at the Court—foresaw the rest.
My friend, the King loves Julie.

MAUPRAT

What! The King!

BARADAS

But royal indiscretions must be hid.
The lady must be married, all good form.
He looked abroad—found you his foe—thus served
Ambition, by the grandeur of his ward,
And vengeance, by dishonor to his foe.
Forgive me, friend, that I should tell you this.

MAUPRAT

I can't believe it.

BARADAS

But you have the proof.
Who knew of Faviaux but Richelieu?
Until you told me yesterday. And I am
Your friend. No, he alone could tell the King
The tale that sells your life, or buys your honor.

MAUPRAT

Can it be true! Mock pardon—hurried wedding—
False bounty—all for one vile end. Oh, God,
That such a man should master be of France!

BARADAS

He shall be master but a little while.
Our plans are sure, with Orleans at our head.
We meet to-night. Join us and with us end
His power. The time is ripe. The King himself
Smiles kindly when I tell him that his peers
Will rid him of his priest.

MAUPRAT

And Julie?

BARADAS

She!
The King infirm in health, in mind more weak,
Is but a plaything for his minister.
Richelieu dead, his power will then be mine.
I shall protect your wife.

MAUPRAT

Richelieu dead!
Yes, he deserves to die.

BARADAS

And by your hand.
You first of all should claim that glory.

MAUPRAT

Oh,
I know not what to do. This my right hand
Itches to grip his throat. And this, my left,
Would hurl the lustful King from Julie, while
Both arms would clasp her close to shelter her.
Farewell!

BARADAS

Where you going?

MAUPRAT

Anywhere—
Outside—the gardens—there to cast myself
Upon the ground, hold tight my arms lest they,
All too impetuous, may dare some deed

Would make her suffer—
[*Exit L.*]

BARADAS

[*Following, speaks off.*]

Yet, it may be, failing
To dare such deeds might make her suffer more.
[*Enter* BERINGHEN *B.*]

BERINGHEN

De Mauprat, what a cook you have! The man's
A perfect miracle. What, my host gone!
Faith, Count, my office is a post of danger.
A fiery fellow, Mauprat—touch and go—
Match and saltpeter! Pr-r-r-r-r!

BARADAS

You
Will be released and soon. The royal carriage
Is on its way to fetch the bride to Court.

BERINGHEN

Yet, since you love the lady, why so careless
Of the King's suit?

BARADAS

The lady's virtuous,
Louis a timid fool. While yet he woos
He'll lose his crown. Julie will be a widow,
And I—the new made Richelieu of France—
With Orleans regent—you one of the council.

BERINGHEN

We meet to-night?

BARADAS

To-night at Marion's,
To sign and send to Bouillon the dispatch.

BERINGHEN

My head will not be comfortable on
My shoulders, till the armies have arrived,
The King's dethroned, and Richelieu deceased.

BARADAS

I've found the man to murder Richelieu.

BERINGHEN

You can't mean me. No Count, I am, I own,
A valiant dog—but still—

BARADAS

Whom can I mean
But Mauprat?

BERINGHEN

Mauprat!

BARADAS

He must nothing learn
Of the dispatch. He only bites at vengeance
And he would start from treason. We must post him
Outside the door at Marion's—a sentry.
So, when his head is on the block, his tongue
Cannot betray our more august designs.

BERINGHEN

Talk not of heads on blocks. It makes my own
Prophetically ache! Come, Count, with me.
Conspiracies be damned. In the next room
There's a delicious paté. Let's discuss it.

BARADAS

Pshaw! A man filled with a sublime ambition
Has no time to discuss your patés.

BERINGHEN

Pshaw,
And a man filled with so sublime a paté
Has no time to discuss ambition. Gad,
I have the best of it.
[*Enter* JULIE *and* CLERMONT, *B.*]

JULIE

A summons, sir,
To attend the Louvre? My wedding day?

CLERMONT

Madame,
The royal carriage is below.
[*To* BERINGHEN.]
Messire,
You will return with us.

JULIE

[*To* BARADAS.]
What can this mean?
Where is my husband?

BARADAS

He has gone away.
An hour or two. Important business—

JULIE

Oh!

BARADAS

But all is well. He knew the King would send
For you. It is his wish you go.

JULIE

His wish!
But this is strange—

CLERMONT

Madame!

JULIE

I'm coming.
[*To* BARADAS.]
You
Will see him—tell him—?

BARADAS

Instantly. Since there
Is nothing that I would not do for you.
[*Exit* JULIE *B.*]

CLERMONT

[*To* BERINGHEN.]
Messire—

BERINGHEN

Now—just a moment—

CLERMONT

After you!

BERINGHEN

I shan't discuss my paté after all!
[*Exit B.*]

BARADAS

[*To* CLERMONT, *who delays.*]
This for De Mauprat the last straw. You'll see.
He will go mad. He'll murder Richelieu,
Die for that crime. I shall console his Julie—

CLERMONT

Look, Count! De Mauprat, hurrying—distrait—

BARADAS

Then go—go quickly—
[*Exit* CLERMONT *B.*]
[*Crossing to L., meeting* MAUPRAT.]
Well, have you decided,
Friend Mauprat?

MAUPRAT

From the terrace there I saw
The carriage of the King—and Julie.

BARADAS

Yes.

MAUPRAT

I'll stop them—follow them—

BARADAS

And lose all hope?
That path leads to one end—to the Bastille.
From close-barred cell could you help Julie?

MAUPRAT

No!

BARADAS

Alas, the forkéd guile of Richelieu
Strikes swift as lightning; blasts whate'er it strikes.

MAUPRAT

Richelieu!

BARADAS

He's your endless enemy.
While he lives on, no hope of happiness.
But courage! Julie's virtue can withstand
The cautious courtship of the King. If you—

MAUPRAT

If I?

BARADAS

Richelieu dead—no danger more.

MAUPRAT

I was not bred to murder. Yet it seems
That each strong fiber of me throbs to kill
This old malignant man who menaces
My Julie's honor—ancient liar—trickster,
Triumphant panderer! Now I am yours!

BARADAS

Most bravely said. Meet us at Marion's—
To-night at midnight.

MAUPRAT

What! So long to wait!
Must this, my steel, all parched and thirsty, pause
Unslaked till midnight?

BARADAS

Patience, stay within
And nurse your fire.
[*Exit B.*]

MAUPRAT

[*Calling after him.*]
Until it grows to flame!

CURTAIN

Scene II

It is later the same afternoon—the same room in the Cardinal's *palace which we saw in Act One, Scene II.*

At the rise of the curtain, the stage is empty, but almost instantly Francois *enters from left and stands aside as* Richelieu *comes wearily in, followed in turn by* Joseph.

FRANCOIS

Sir, lean upon my shoulder.

RICHELIEU

Thank you, boy.

JOSEPH

If you are weary . . .

RICHELIEU

No!

JOSEPH

This news . . .

RICHELIEU

Go on!

JOSEPH

Your Huguet making his accustomed rounds,
Disguised as some plain burgher, heard these rufflers
Quoting your name. He listened. "So," said one,
"We are to seize the Cardinal in his palace."
"And how and when?" the other asked—"You'll hear
The whole design to-night. The Duke of Orleans
And Baradas have got the map of action
At finger's end."—"So be it," said the other.
"I will be there—at midnight—Marion's."

RICHELIEU

At Marion's?

JOSEPH

Yes, Marion de Lorme.

She's Orlean's mistress, dangerous as well.
I've told you of her.

RICHELIEU

So you have.

JOSEPH

Their plans
Are mightier than you think. You must employ
Means no less mighty.

RICHELIEU

Bah! In policy
The smallest stone will trip and fell a giant.
Ah, were I younger, by the soldier's heart
That beats beneath these priestly robes, I would
Have pastime with these cutthroats hand to hand.
Reach me that falchion, Francois. Not that plaything
For carpet warriors—that two-handed sword,
A blade Charles Martel might have wielded when
He drove the Saracens from France.
[FRANCOIS *has brought sword.*]
With this
I fought the English at Rochelle. This felt
A toy, a feather then. . . .
[*He tries to lift it, fails, lets it fall and sinks in chair.*]
A child could kill
Richelieu now.

FRANCOIS

But now, at your command,
Are other weapons, my good lord.

RICHELIEU

[*Picks up pen.*]

Yes. This!
The pen is mightier than the sword. So frail
It seems; yet, wielded by the master hand,
It strikes to paralyze embattled Cæsars.
So—take away the sword. States can be saved
Without it.
[*As the bell tolls four.*]
Ah, it is the hour.
[*To* FRANCOIS.]
Go, leave us,
Francois.
[*Exit* FRANCOIS *R.*]
Wait, Joseph.
[RICHELIEU *raps three times on desk. The concealed door opens at L. B. and through it enters* MARION.]

JOSEPH

Marion de Lorme!

RICHELIEU

The same. The one—you—told me of! Keep guard
At door. My faithful Marion!

MARION

My lord,
They meet to-night in my poor house. The Duke
Of Orleans heads them.

RICHELIEU

Yes. Go on.

MARION

His Highness
Questioned me if I knew some man, discreet
And brave, who had a silent tongue, and who
Jointly loved gold and hated Richelieu.

RICHELIEU

You answered?

MARION

That I had a brother—bold
And trusty—loyal to his cause. The Duke
Bade me have him equipped, armed, mounted—ready
To ride to-night for Italy.

RICHELIEU

Bouillon!
Has he turned traitor too? I might have guessed.
What part of Italy?

MARION

The Piedmont frontier.
Where Bouillon lies encamped.

RICHELIEU

Now there is danger!
Great danger! If he tamper with the Spaniards,
The King heed not my counsel, as without
Sure proof he will not, France is lost—unless—
What more?

MARION

Dark hints of some design to seize
You unaware.

RICHELIEU

And nothing clear?

MARION

Nothing.
But when I sought to question Orleans, he
Turned white and silent.

RICHELIEU

So. Who is this brother
You recommended to the Duke?

MARION

Whoever
Your Eminence may choose.

RICHELIEU

My Marion!
[*Picks bag of gold from desk.*]
There—pshaw—a trifle. What an eye you have
And what a smile! 'Tis well I am a priest
And old. Not the young soldier I once was.

MARION

The one true thing in my young, worthless life
Is that I worship you, my lord. Be watchful.
These men have won the King. And Baradas
Frightens me. He is tireless, cruel, shrewd.

If these seem woman-fears to you, my lord,
I pray you heed them still.

RICHELIEU

What hour their meeting?

MARION

Midnight.

RICHELIEU

You'll see the Duke's dispatch is given
To the man I send?

MARION

I swear it.

RICHELIEU

Huguet? No.
He will be needed elsewhere. Joseph? Zealous
But too well known, identified with me.
Mauprat?—Alas, it is his wedding day.
Francois! The man of men, unnoted, young,
Ambitious.
[*Calls off.*]
Francois!
[*Enter* FRANCOIS *R.*]
Follow this fair lady—
[*To* MARION.]
Find him the suiting garments, Marion.
[*To* FRANCOIS.]
Arm to the teeth and take my fleetest horse.
A packet will be given you with orders,

No matter what. The instant that your hand
Closes upon it, clutch it like your honor.
Dig your spurs deep. Be breathless till you stand
Again before me, high of heart. The hour
I grasp that packet, boy, your guardian star
Rains fortune on you.

FRANCOIS

If I fail—?

RICHELIEU

Fail? *Fail?*
In the lexicon of youth there's no such word
As—*fail.*
[*To* MARION.]
Instruct him further, Marion.
[*To* FRANCOIS.]
Follow her—but at distance. Speak not to her
Till you are housed. Farewell, boy. Never say
"Fail" again.

FRANCOIS

Never, sir.

MARION

Farewell, my lord.
If I could pray, that prayer would be for you!
[*Exeunt* FRANCOIS *and* MARION *L. B.*]

RICHELIEU

Both young. Both loyal. Yet how separate!

He would be priest, and she . . . ! The chaff and wheat
Both have their uses, Joseph. And the chaff
Is often gritty where the wheat is soft.

JOSEPH

You let me think you did not know her.

RICHELIEU

Who,
Think you, placed her where Orleans saw, admired?

JOSEPH

You hid this door as well.

RICHELIEU

No one within
Has known that secret passage. None must know.

JOSEPH

Not Huguet and the guard?

RICHELIEU

They last of all.
'Tis well, I've found, to have one avenue
Of secret safety, so protect myself
From those sworn to protect me. But, to business!
Our courtier friends, it seems, like me so much
They seek to seize me, Joseph. For my part
I yearn not for such intimacy, so
I'd scan the guard, change, strengthen it until
Each man's beyond suspicion. Huguet first—

[*The concealed door at L. B. opens and* HUGUET *appears, unseen by* RICHELIEU.]

Can I trust Huguet? Think. We hanged his father.

JOSEPH

But you have bought the son—heaped favors on him.

RICHELIEU

Ah, favors past—are past. Favors to come—
Those are the favors that are useful. They
Produce a lusty, hungry gratitude.
Has Huguet told you what he longs for most?

JOSEPH

He'd like a colonel's rank. And then—

RICHELIEU

What! More?

JOSEPH

To be a noble.

RICHELIEU

Bashful Huguet! No.
He aims too high. Still—I can promise it
And see the King withholds. Ah, Kings are oft
A great convenience to a minister.

[HUGUET, *showing his anger, exits through secret door.*]

No wrong to Huguet either. Moralists
Say hope is sweeter than possession. Yes.
We'll count on Huguet. Hush! I thought I heard
A footfall—soft—on tiptoe.

JOSEPH

Who would come
On tiptoe hither?

RICHELIEU

True. And yet—! In times
Like this, ears sharpen, seem to hear the sounds
They vainly listen for. This treason burns
White hot. It has two phases—first, my death.

JOSEPH

Death!

RICHELIEU

Yes. That is their shrouded aim to-night.

JOSEPH

Then why not tell the King, and have a force
Lying in wait to seize them in the act?

RICHELIEU

Louis would not believe. He half desires
My death. No, I must deal with this alone.
Second—the greater treason to the State,
Bouillon, the Spaniards! There I must have proof.
The single proof is that dispatch they send
To-night to Bouillon. That I must obtain.
Meanwhile you dawdle idly to the Court,
To dive with careless eyes into men's hearts,
As ghostly churchmen should. And black-gowned spies
Shall follow, through the dark, Count Baradas,
Beringhen, Orleans and the rest. . . .
[*Enter* HUGUET *L.*]

HUGUET

My lord,
Your Eminence bade me seek you at this hour.

RICHELIEU

Why—so I did. You have heard, I am told,
Strange tales of snares and traps for Richelieu.
Now you shall help to balk them. You command
The guard. How many are there?

HUGUET

Twenty, sir.

RICHELIEU

All trusty?

HUGUET

Well enough for ordinary
Occasions—but for great ones I should change
Three-fourths at least.

RICHELIEU

And what are great occasions?

HUGUET

Great bribes!

RICHELIEU

Joseph, he knows some paragons
Superior to bribes.

HUGUET

True gentlemen
Who have transgressed the laws and value life

And lack not gold. Your Eminence alone
Can grant them pardon. Ergo, you can trust them.

RICHELIEU

Logic! Enroll this honest, lawless twenty!
Will it take long to find these ornaments
To human nature?

HUGUET

No. They are not birds
That love the daylight. But I know a haunt
Where they meet nightly.

RICHELIEU

Twenty sword-skilled saints!
By midnight they could be assembled?

HUGUET

Yes.

RICHELIEU

Could twenty men, well posted, keep such guard
That no one step (and murder's step is stealthy)
Could glide within—unseen?

HUGUET

With twenty men—
Such men as these—I could hold off a host.

RICHELIEU

Perhaps you shall. I trust you, Huguet.

HUGUET

Thanks,
My lord.

RICHELIEU

You're made to rise, a valiant fellow,
Religious, exemplary, incorrupt.
A precious jewel of a fellow, Huguet.
If I live long enough—now mark my words:
If I—live—long enough, you may be colonel,
Noble, perhaps. I have great plans for you.

HUGUET

You leave me dumb with gratitude, my lord.
Your guard to-night will be both brave and ruthless.
Sir, you will be amazed to note their prowess.
[*Exit L.*]

RICHELIEU

Now let them try their game, for we are ready!
If Francois be but bold and Huguet honest.
Huguet I half suspect. He bowed too low.
'Tis not his way. And wait—that footfall! Could
That have been his—?

JOSEPH

You can trust Huguet.

RICHELIEU

No.
I can trust nobody.

JOSEPH

This is the curse
Of your high state, suspicion of all men.

RICHELIEU

True, true. My leeches bribed to poisoners; pages
To strangle me in sleep—my very King
(This brain the unresting loom from which was woven
The purple of his greatness) leagued against me!
Old—childless—friendless—broken—all forsake,
All—all but—

JOSEPH

Who?

RICHELIEU

The indomitable heart
Of Armand Richelieu.

JOSEPH

No one else?

RICHELIEU

Why . . . Julie.

JOSEPH

None else?

RICHELIEU

Yes. Mauprat. He is now my friend.

JOSEPH

No one beside?

RICHELIEU

Well, Francois, just a boy.
My faithful Marion.

JOSEPH

And—Joseph?

RICHELIEU

You?
Yes, I can trust you—yes, for all men fear you,
And the world loves you not. And I, friend Joseph,
I am the only man who could, my Joseph,
Make you a bishop.
[*As* JOSEPH *shows his eagerness.*]
Come, we'll go to dinner
And talk of methods to advance—

JOSEPH

Yes? Yes?

RICHELIEU

Our Mother Church.
[*As* JOSEPH *shows disappointment.*]
Ah, Joseph! *Bishop* Joseph!

CURTAIN

SCENE III

It is again the room in RICHELIEU'S *palace. The evening has passed and it is now after midnight. The room is dimly lighted by candelabra on* RICHELIEU'S

desk, the light being centralized to that portion of the stage, the rest of the room in shadows. At rise RICHELIEU *is pacing slowly at left.* JOSEPH *is sitting at desk with a book in his hand.*

RICHELIEU

Midnight and after. Not a whisper stirs.
Yet it is silence pregnant with alarm.
Read to me, Joseph, take my mind away
From soundless threats. Teach me philosophy.

JOSEPH

[*Reading from book.*]
"In silence and at night the Conscience feels
That Life should soar to nobler ends than power"—

RICHELIEU

[*Breaking in.*]
To nobler ends? What ends? How can he know
In the unvexed quiet of a student's cell,
He, whose untempted heart has never tossed
Upon the dark and stormy tides where life
Is battle? Oh, these safe and formal men,
Who write of deeds, and with unfevered hand,
Weigh in nice scales the motives of the great!
And yet they may be right.

JOSEPH

In theory!

RICHELIEU

I weary of the strife. Hush! No, 'tis nothing.

Ah, Joseph, I have been a builder. True—
I have shed blood, but I have had no foes
Save those my country had. Was it worth while?
For see—I am not happy—blanched and seared
Before my time—breathing an air of hate—
Listening now for treason's stealthy step.
Was it worth while? I wonder.
[*Suddenly staggers.*]
Ah!

JOSEPH

You faint!
Sir, lean on me.

RICHELIEU

So—once again that spasm!
'Tis nothing. It will pass. How life and death
Do wrestle for me momently. And yet
I shall—I must live on. Ah, golden Youth!
Oh, for one gale from your exulting morning
To blow new vigor in my withered frame,
Or, lacking that, the rest and peace of age.
No peace for me. Ambition has no rest.
Shall I resign? Who can resign himself?
For custom is ourself. Yet better far
An honored home away from base intrigues,
Fears all forgotten, struggles past. The book,
It may be right.
[*Enter* FRANCOIS *L.*]
No, it is wrong! Francois!
Quick—the dispatch! Power! Empire! Boy, the packet!

FRANCOIS

Kill me, my lord.

RICHELIEU

They knew you. They suspected.
They gave it not.

FRANCOIS

He gave it to me—Count
De Baradas, with his own hand he gave it.

RICHELIEU

Then where is it—tell me.

FRANCOIS

Listen, my lord—

RICHELIEU

Go on.

FRANCOIS

They led me to a chamber. There
Orleans and Baradas and some half score
Whom I knew not were met.

RICHELIEU

Not more?

FRANCOIS

But from
The adjoining chamber broke the din of voices,
The clattering tread of armed men. At times
Echoed shrill cries of "Death to Richelieu!"

RICHELIEU

Speak not of me. The packet!

FRANCOIS

Baradas
Questioned me close—demurred. Orleans insisted.
They gave me the dispatch—this gold as well—

RICHELIEU

Gold is no proof.

FRANCOIS

And Orleans promised thousands
If I delivered the dispatch to Bouillon.
I hastened from the house, ready to mount.
A figure followed. It was Marion.
She whispered "Speed to Richelieu. Warn him
Murder is in the wings of night. They swear
Before the dawn the Cardinal shall die."
Trembling she fled within. I sprang to horse.
Then hands of iron gripped me. Through the dark
Gleamed the dim shadow of an arméd man.
All in an instant the dispatch was gone.
A grim voice muttered, "Spy, I spare you since
I keep my steel for Richelieu." With that
He vanished. Trembling for your safety, I
Spurred swift to warn you. I have failed, my lord.
I beg you, take my life.

RICHELIEU

What good is life?
I charged you clutch that packet as your honor.

The man who tore it from you sought my death.
Upon that clue speed back to Marion
Or Baradas or Orleans. Track the robber.
Regain the packet and redeem your honor.
[*As* FRANCOIS *starts to turn away.*]
Good cheer. New courage. You have not failed yet.
There's no such word as fail.

FRANCOIS

Thank you, my lord,
For that one smile. I can dare anything
To win another!
[*Exit L.*]

JOSEPH

He is much too young.

RICHELIEU

An elder had asked life. I love the young,
For as great men live not in their own time
But the next race—so in the young, my soul
Makes many Richelieus.

JOSEPH

This murder threat!
I warn you they are strong.

RICHELIEU

So am I strong,
However dark the moment. Let them plot,
For I am laughing at them.

JOSEPH

While you laugh,
My lord, your hand is icy cold.

RICHELIEU

No doubt.
We are strange mixtures, brave and weak at once.
I laugh and yet I shudder. Even now
Through the chill air the beating of my heart
Sounds like a death watch by a sick man's pillow.
If Huguet *could* deceive me—!
[*The clatter of horses' hoofs breaks sharply the silence.*]
Hoofs without!
The gates unclose! Steps nearer and nearer—
[*From L.* JULIE *enters hurrying.*]

JULIE

[*Rushes to him, falls at his feet.*]
Father!

RICHELIEU

Go, Joseph. See if Huguet has arrived with
His twenty.
[*Exit* JOSEPH *L.*]

JULIE

I am safe. I am with you.

RICHELIEU

Safe? Who in all the world would wish you harm,
Or cause you suffering?

JULIE

The man I loved . . .
Never can love again.

RICHELIEU

Tell me.

JULIE

To-day,
Our marriage day, even then no more a lover,
He left me—strange, how strange he was! And then
Sudden a mandate from the King that I
Attend forthwith his pleasure at the Louvre.

RICHELIEU

So you obeyed the summons. And the King
Reproached your hasty wedding.

JULIE

How much more!
He said it was unlawful, and commanded
That I leave not my chamber at his Palace.
And there—alone—this night—all still—he came
And dared—!

RICHELIEU

Hm. He a King. You, woman. So—
You yielded?

JULIE

Cardinal!

RICHELIEU

So—you did not yield.

Brave Julie! How few women at the Court
Would dare say no to Louis. What was next?
He left you?

JULIE

Yes. Later came Baradas.
I liked him not before. To-night he seemed
All kindness and consideration. He
Spoke bitterly against the King, and sought
To cloak from me that darker treachery
Which in the end I forced him to lay bare.

RICHELIEU

What treachery?

JULIE

That man, my husband!

RICHELIEU

Mauprat?

JULIE

That he thought Louis' love for me an honor!

RICHELIEU

And you believed that?

JULIE

Not at first, I could not.
Then I remembered how aloof he was,
How cold, intent on business and affairs,
Yet so ashamed he could not meet my eye.
And how he went away, leaving me word

That I should go to meet the King. Then I
Perforce believed. What else could I believe?

RICHELIEU

I think you wrong de Mauprat, but go on—

JULIE

One does in madness what one dares not do,
Quite sane. I sought the Queen, told her my story
And begged her aid to flee our joint disgrace.
Her word unlocked the palace gates. I sped
To you for refuge.

RICHELIEU

You are trembling.

JULIE

Yes.
As I arrived—the clang of arms behind,
The ring of hoofs!

RICHELIEU

It was my guard. They're here,
And Huguet kept his word. So all is well.

JULIE

I am afraid. The very silence seems
Alive with shouts choked back, but menacing!

RICHELIEU

No, you are weary, child, and overwrought.
Ah, youth! Its golden morning can turn black
So swiftly! Perhaps age is best. Come, rest.

You shall lodge here with me to-night, quite safe.
All will be well—yes, yet all shall be well.
[*They exeunt R.*]
[*Almost instantly* HUGUET *and* MAUPRAT, *who is masked, enter through concealed door L.B.*]

HUGUET

He is not here.

MAUPRAT

What matter? I shall find him.
He is alone, now we have bound his Joseph.

HUGUET

Could he have been forewarned?

MAUPRAT

He might have been
But for a lucky chance. I caught two spies
There in the dark outside of Marion's. . . .
A man and woman, he about to mount
His horse. She whispered: "Speed to Richelieu.
Murder is in the wings of night," then vanished.
I seized the man, tore from his hand this packet.
[*Hands packet to* HUGUET.]
A warning in detail, of course, of all
Our plans. I've had no chance to open it,
Enough to stop it.

HUGUET

Listen!

MAUPRAT

Steps! Go quickly.

[*Exit* HUGUET *L.*]
[*Enter R.* RICHELIEU.]

RICHELIEU

[*Speaking off to* JULIE.]
Sleep comfort you. Nay, leave the single light,
For in this heavy air, moon-hidden, still,
The darkness lends itself to fear and dreams
Of treachery—

MAUPRAT

And death.

RICHELIEU

[*Closing door.*]
Hush. Is it you,
My Joseph?

MAUPRAT

No, I am your death!

RICHELIEU

Huguet!
The guard! Montbrassil!

MAUPRAT

No. Your men of mail
Are my confederates. They hem you in
On every side. It is your end.

RICHELIEU

You lie.
I am old, infirm, most feeble—yet, you lie.

The stars have said that Richelieu dies not
By hand of man—

MAUPRAT

The stars could not foresee
To gain your own aims you would scar a man
With shame and tear his heart.

RICHELIEU

Who are you? Not
A paid assassin. Have I wronged you? How?
Beware surmise, suspicion, lies. I am
Too great for men to speak the truth of me.

MAUPRAT

Then hear the truth—for the last time, my lord.
I am that soldier you had marked for death.
When your death meant my life, I did refuse
To do this present deed. And what came next?
You summoned me and strangely pardoned me,
Gave wealth and with it her. I did not question.
I drained the cup of joy, only to find
Its poisoned dregs. I was but panderer
To her, my wife, and him, King Louis, royal
Adulterer!

RICHELIEU

I know you now. De Mauprat!

MAUPRAT

You dared the lightning. Now through my poor hand

[*Raises dagger.*]
The lightning strikes!

RICHELIEU

Down on your knees for pardon!
It was to save my Julie from the King
That in your valor I forgave your crime.

MAUPRAT

Shrewd words!

RICHELIEU

And when, forsaken by her husband,
She braved the King alone, it was to me
She fled for shelter.

MAUPRAT

Think you I believe
Another lie?

RICHELIEU

Then keep your dagger ready
Until I prove it.
[*Opens door R., calls off.*]
Julie!

JULIE

[*From off R.*]
Yes, my father.

MAUPRAT

It is her voice.
[*Enter* JULIE *R.*]

RICHELIEU

Here is my witness.

MAUPRAT

Julie!

JULIE

[*To* RICHELIEU.]

Why is he here? The man I thought I loved—
And hate!

MAUPRAT

[*To* RICHELIEU.]

So you have slandered me to her!

JULIE

Not he. He took your part, sought to excuse you.
Your friend and confidant, Count Baradas—
Not he—told me the truth.

MAUPRAT

What truth?

RICHELIEU

That you—
Not I, Messire De Mauprat—*you* arranged
Her liaison with Louis!

MAUPRAT

Baradas!
If this be so, his sword shall answer mine!

RICHELIEU

Meanwhile he told you, Mauprat, it was I!

To rouse your rage, too quick at best—so make
Of you a catspaw to this crime you have
To-night almost committed.

JULIE

Adrien!
What have you done? Oh, were we both deceived?
It has been hard—so hard—to hate you.

MAUPRAT

Julie!

RICHELIEU

Put by your sword, and take her in your arms.
With love erase the shadows from your hearts.

MAUPRAT

How blind I've been!

RICHELIEU

Blind? Why the very mole
Less blind than you. Baradas loves your wife,
Schemes for your death, the while he schemes for mine.

MAUPRAT

Schemes for *your* death! Forgive me, Julie. Sir,
I came but one of many.

RICHELIEU

Many?

MAUPRAT

Yes.
These halls swarm with assassins, all intent
Upon your murder.

JULIE

Murder!

RICHELIEU

Julie! Hush!

JULIE

But—

RICHELIEU

Hush! A shriek—a cry—a breath too loud
Might startle these grim guests to eager action.
Quick must we plan escape.

MAUPRAT

Escape, my lord!
There's no escape. But, sir, their blades shall pass
My heart to yours.

RICHELIEU

An honorable outwork,
No doubt, but much too near the citadel.
How many of my troop league with you?

MAUPRAT

All!
We *are* your troop.

RICHELIEU

And Huguet?

MAUPRAT

Is our captain.

RICHELIEU

The lion's skin becomes too short to-night.
We'll try the fox's.
[*He goes to the secret door, opens it.*]

JULIE

[*As voices and steps are heard through the opened door.*]

A hoarse gathering murmur!
And footsteps—climbing closer!

RICHELIEU

[*Closing door.*]

Huguet knew!
We'll chance the postern gate.

MAUPRAT

No hope. It's guarded.
Sentries are everywhere.

RICHELIEU

I have it. Julie,
You to my closet. Mauprat, fetch the candles,
And swiftly. Come.
[*Exit* JULIE *B.*]

VOICES

[*From off L. and L.B.*]

Death to the Cardinal!

RICHELIEU

[*Holding curtains B. aside for* MAUPRAT.]

How oft the hounds have bayed, close to their quarry,
Yet drooped, defeated, home. So shall they now,
Can we but twist our track—

[*Exit B. with* MAUPRAT.]

HUGUET

[*Off stage L.B.*]

This way! This way!

[*Enters L.B., followed, one by one, into the shadowy darkness of the room by the Twenty.*]

De Mauprat's hand was never slow in battle.
Strange if it falter now.

ONE OF THE TWENTY

The room is empty.

ANOTHER OF THE TWENTY

Perchance he is within!

MAUPRAT

[*Appearing through curtains, B.*]

Long live the King!

For Richelieu is dead.

[*Drawing curtains of recess aside, and showing* RICHELIEU *lying on couch, in attitude of death, the candle-light white upon his face.*]

HUGUET

Are—his eyes—open?

MAUPRAT

As if in life.

HUGUET

I cannot look at him.
Those keen all-seeing eyes, even in death.
Quick—draw the curtains.

ONE OF THE TWENTY

No. We came to kill.
There's blood still in his veins. Let's sink our daggers
Deep in his corpse and leave them there.

MAUPRAT

My friends.
I found him here. I watched him till he slept.
You see—no trace of blood reveals the deed.
Strangled in sleep. His health had long been broken.
So natural he dies, no murder here.
Thus runs our tale. And we are safe—

ANOTHER OF THE TWENTY

Come, friends.
There's sense in that.

MAUPRAT

So back to Baradas
For your rewards.

OTHERS OF TWENTY

Yes. Yes.

HUGUET

I shall be noble!

ONE OF TWENTY

Vive Orleans, Baradas!

ANOTHER OF TWENTY

Five thousand crowns!

OTHERS

[*As they all rush off L., and L.B.*]

This way! Five thousand crowns! This way!

MAUPRAT

To horse!

Away!

[*Exit, last of all.*]

[*The noise of their footsteps and their cries fade. The sound of horses' hoofs is heard outside, going away.* MAUPRAT *steals back, closing door, and shutting out the last sounds of the mob.*]

Lord Cardinal!

[*Watching the still silent figure, he crosses anxiously up, until he stands at* RICHELIEU'S *feet.*]

Lord Cardinal!

RICHELIEU

[*Still motionless.*]

Foxes can have nine lives as well as cats.

CURTAIN

ACT THREE

Scene I

It is the room in Marion's *house which we saw in the first scene of the play. An hour has passed since the last scene of Act II.*

At the rise of the curtain Beringhen *is eating fruit from a large bowl on the table.* Orleans *is pacing anxiously at back.*

ORLEANS

How can you eat?

BERINGHEN

How can you not? 'Tis good.
And somehow one must keep oneself awake!

ORLEANS

If we should fail!

BERINGHEN

Then must we run for it
Or shift the blame or say we were deceived.
But that's the future, Prince. These pears are *now.*
[*Enter* Baradas *with* Clermont *L.*]

ORLEANS

What word?

BARADAS

Nothing as yet. But I have this
[*Shows writ.*]
To aid us once the longed-for news arrives.
Julie has fled. The King, enraged, has signed
This writ which sends Mauprat to prison. So . . .
Before he might tell tales of us to Louis
We close him tight behind staunch bars of iron.

BERINGHEN

You think of everything. Together we
The perfect man—you, brain; I, stomach.

ORLEANS

But
The courier?

BARADAS

Well on his way by now.

ORLEANS

Should he be stopped . . . our names in that dispatch!

BARADAS

Small chance of that once he is outside Paris.

ORLEANS

I am all nerves!

BARADAS

And I all zest to gain
This promised power.

BERINGHEN

And I all yawns. I say
That Marion has all the best of it.
She's sound asleep on couch in yonder room.
To put it delicately she is breathing
Quite heavily. Would I might be so lucky!

ORLEANS

[*As* DURAN *enters L.*]
Here's action. . . .

BARADAS

[*To* DURAN.]
Well?

DURAN

My lord, a strange, armed man,
Breathless with haste, requests an audience.

BARADAS

Huguet!

DURAN

With him a motley clamoring crowd.

BARADAS

Send away all but Huguet. Say to them
They'll hear from me to-morrow.

DURAN

Yes, my lord.

BARADAS

Where are my men?

DURAN

The hallway, sir, beyond.

BARADAS

Good. Have them ready. Then send Huguet in.
[*Exit* DURAN.]

BERINGHEN

It's heads or tails. We win or lose.

ORLEANS

Now shall
We know whether the fates are kind.
[*Enter* HUGUET *L.*]

HUGUET

My lords,
Great Richelieu is dead.

ORLEANS

He's dead?

BERINGHEN

Thank God!

BARADAS

How did he die?

HUGUET

Strangled in sleep, my lord.
Fulfill your promise. Make me noble.

BARADAS

Noble!
[*To soldiers who rush in from L. at his signal.*]

Seize on this ruffian, bind him, gag him. Off
To the Bastille.
[*They seize* HUGUET.]

HUGUET

Your word! Your plighted faith!

BARADAS

He's mad or cries for mercy.

HUGUET

For your safety
Listen to me—for I can tell you much.
Your Marion is faithless. I have seen her
Lurking there at the Cardinal's.

ORLEANS

A lie!
Made up to save himself.

HUGUET

No. Wait, sirs. Wait!
I've something here which you—

BARADAS

Take him away.

[*Guards exeunt with* HUGUET.]

HUGUET

[*Shouting from off L.*]
Count Baradas! Listen to me!

BERINGHEN

Poor dog!

BARADAS

Now all is safe. Huguet must die in prison.
De Mauprat too. The others in this crime—
[*With ironic laughter.*]
This crime most dastardly against the State!—
We'll coax or force to fly the country. So . . .
The game is ours!

ORLEANS

His talk of Marion
Was nonsense, Count. The girl is all devotion.

BARADAS

It weighed so little with me, Prince, that I
Had quite forgotten it.

BERINGHEN

The courier . . .
If he arrives at Bouillon's camp, delivers
The packet—

CLERMONT

All is well with us!

DURAN

[*Reëntering.*]

My lord.

BARADAS

What now?

DURAN

A man—young, handsome, in distress—
Would see you.

BERINGHEN

Handsome?

CLERMONT

Young?

BARADAS

Let him come in.

[*Exit* DURAN.]

ORLEANS

Who can it be?

BARADAS

Mauprat. Who else? I'm ready
For him.

[*Enter* FRANCOIS.]

CLERMONT

The courier!

BARADAS

What do you here
In Paris still?

ORLEANS

The packet! The dispatch!

FRANCOIS

Some spy outside this very door to-night
Seized me and tore it from me.

BERINGHEN

Hours ago!

BARADAS

Where have you been, boy, since?

FRANCOIS

Dismayed, distrait,
I've sought him everywhere.

BARADAS

How did he look?

FRANCOIS

I could not see his face.

BARADAS

Then he wore armor?

FRANCOIS

I could not tell, my lord, so black the night!

ORLEANS

Outside the door! One of the sentries!

BARADAS

Wait!
Could it be Mauprat? It could be no other.

FRANCOIS

De Mauprat!

BARADAS

[*To others.*]

He knew naught of the dispatch.
I set him sentry at the door for that.

FRANCOIS

Where might he be?

BARADAS

His house most like by now.
And Julie with him. They together! Go.
Find Mauprat. Beg, steal, force the packet back,
Or die to-morrow.

FRANCOIS

Sir, I shall regain it.
Not fearing death, but to redeem my honor.
[*Exit L.*]

BERINGHEN

Honor, quoth he. The boy is very young.

BARADAS

Is he trustworthy?

ORLEANS

Marion's own brother?
Why surely, Count.

BARADAS

Quite so. I had forgot.
And yet we must not leave to him alone
This anxious search for Mauprat. You, my Prince,
Have your own retinue, whom you can trust.
Let a picked dozen go scour Paris clean

Till they unearth him, bind him, bring him here.
Take Beringhen for their commander.

BERINGHEN

What!
Oh, bother Mauprat. These conspiracies
Are scarcely worth their deprivations. I
Am dead for sleep!
[*Exit L.*]

ORLEANS

[*At door L.*]
Oh, we are lost!

BARADAS

Not so.
Small danger now that Richelieu is dead.
If Mauprat has the packet we arrest him,
And gain it with him. If outside the door
Some other soldier stood to-night, he is
Our friend, unless among us there's a traitor.

ORLEANS

Say my farewell to Marion.
[*Exit L.*]

BARADAS

We'll say
His last farewell to Marion.

CLERMONT

His last?

BARADAS

You know my secret rooms across the Seine.
You'll take her there, but first we'll break her down,
Perchance learn much. Go, call her, Clermont.

CLERMONT

Count!

BARADAS

Leave this to me.

CLERMONT

[*Calls off R.*]

Oh, Marion!

[*To* BARADAS.]

But, Count,
You have no proof.

BARADAS

We shall have proof straightway.
Women, when they are tortured, weaken swift.
[*Enter* MARION *R.*]

MARION

Did some one call?

BARADAS

[*Going to her with feigned courtesy.*]

Prince Orleans bade me say
Farewell for him.

MARION

For this you woke me?

BARADAS

[*Seizing her roughly.*]

No.

So you are false!

MARION

Not I.

BARADAS

[*Forcing her to knees, his hands gripping her throat.*]

If you would live

Tell now the truth, if women like you can.

MARION

Women like me, we tell the truth, my lord.
We've not been taught by marriage how to lie.

BARADAS

You have been at the Cardinal's.

MARION

No, never.

BARADAS

You're in his pay.

MARION

My Prince pays all I need.

BARADAS

You've slyly trafficked with the monk named Joseph!

MARION

That mousy little man! I'd seize my skirts,
Leap to a chair and scream, if he came near me.

BARADAS

[*Throws her on floor.*]
I don't believe you.

MARION

Yours the loss, my lord!

BARADAS

[*Suddenly drawing dagger and plunging it close to her breast.*]
Now swift you die. Quick. What is your last word?

MARION

Long live the Prince! And death to Richelieu!

BARADAS

That prayer's already answered.

MARION

I know that!
You think I was asleep a night like this!
I heard each word, know every move you've made.
It was my duty for my Prince's sake!

BARADAS

[*Turns to L., calls.*]
Duran!

DURAN

[*Entering L.*]
My lord.

BARADAS

Take her. A carriage find.
Then wait for Clermont.

DURAN

Yes, my lord.

MARION

[*With ironic curtsey to* BARADAS.]

Farewell!

[*Crosses to L., pauses.*]

What will you tell my Prince?

BARADAS

That you confessed.

MARION

I looked for that, from such a man as you!

BARADAS

But wait. That boy . . . the courier. He is not
Your brother. Who is he?

[*She turns away contemptuously.*]

Come, answer me!

MARION

I'll answer nothing more. Soon you will say
That white is black, that sun shines but at night.
You'll tell me next that I am Joseph's mistress.
And that the boy, my brother, is a spy
Of Richelieu!

[*Exit L., laughing, with* DURAN.]

CLERMONT

She is both brave and honest.

BARADAS

I am not sure. And I can take no chance.
As for the boy, I have no cause to doubt him.
So we can let him try to find the packet,
Send it to Bouillon by another. Go.

CURTAIN

Scene II

A bit of the gardens of the Louvre. It is about ten o'clock the same morning.

Within a border of wall and trees, formal stone seats curve inward to some steps, which break the stage into two parts, the rear portion somewhat raised above that at the front. Beyond, at the back, you have a vista of the Louvre gardens. You see nothing of the Palace itself, for it is off to the right, but there is a path leading toward it from right back, from the raised portion of the stage. Another path, or really the same path continued across the back, leads toward the outside and Paris itself. There is another path which cuts across the stage between you and the stone seats, and therefore there are entrances at both left and right near the front. It is also possible to start for the Palace from this spot, by descending steps at the extreme back, and swinging off to the right, through the trees.

At the rise of the curtain, ORLEANS *is near the steps at center, waiting impatiently for* BARADAS *to arrive from the Palace. And almost at once* BARADAS, *accompanied by* DE BERINGHEN *and* CLERMONT, *comes in from right back.*

ORLEANS

Count Baradas at last!

BARADAS

All's well so far.

ORLEANS

I have a message from this Huguet.

BARADAS

So

Had I. The same.

ORLEANS

He hints at valued papers .

BARADAS

Most like it is a trick for a reprieve
And yet . . .

ORLEANS

If it should be the lost dispatch!

BARADAS

How could it be?

ORLEANS

No harm, Count, to make sure.

BARADAS

We must remain close by the King. I'll send
De Beringhen to the Bastille, have him
Find out what Huguet has, bring it to me.
De Beringhen, a word with you.

BERINGHEN

[*To* CLERMONT.]

What now?

CLERMONT

My lords, His Majesty is coming near.

ORLEANS

[*To* BARADAS.]
How does my brother bear the Cardinal's death?

BARADAS

With grief when thinking of the toils of State,
With joy when thinking on the eyes of Julie.
At times he sighs: "Now who shall govern France?"
Next moment cries: "Now Julie's mine."

CLERMONT

The King!

[*Enter from R.B.* KING LOUIS, *accompanied by ladies of the court, courtiers and soldiers of his guard.*]

ORLEANS

Now, my Liege—now I can embrace a brother.

LOUIS

Dear Gaston, yes. I do believe you love me.

Richelieu denied it, severed us too long.
A great man, Gaston. Who shall govern France?

BARADAS

Yourself, my Liege. No more of Richelieu.
For did he serve, or seek to sway the King?

LOUIS

Quite so. He was an able politician
And little else. A wretched huntsman—yet
Withal a great man. We shall miss him much.
Precede me, friends.
[*Ladies, courtiers, and all but two of the Guard exeunt R.*]
He had no ear for music.
But—a great man!

BARADAS

Your royal mother said so
And died in exile.

LOUIS

True. I loved my mother.
He was too stern.

ORLEANS

A very Nero.

LOUIS

Yet
Think what a weary weight devolves upon me,
These endless wars—these thankless parliaments—
The snares in which he tangled states and kings.

BARADAS

Richelieu dies. Yet day revives the earth;
The rivers run not back. The power he built
For France remains, my Liege. And Julie lives.

LOUIS

That marriage—there was Richelieu disloyal.
He knew that Julie pleased me.

BARADAS

Ah, but now
No bar between the lady and your will.

LOUIS

Have you arrested Mauprat?

BARADAS

Sire, not yet.

LOUIS

See to it instantly.

BARADAS

I shall, my Liege . . .
Instantly . . .
[*Exeunt* LOUIS, ORLEANS, CLERMONT *and two guards.*]
Promise easier to make
Than keep.

BERINGHEN

The man has disappeared, it seems,
From off the very earth.

BARADAS

We'll find him soon.
Meanwhile a shrewder task for you. This note.
[*Hands him note from* HUGUET.]
Go you to the Bastille. See Huguet. Fetch
Whatever he may have posthaste to me.

BERINGHEN

What might it be?

BARADAS

It might be the dispatch.
You'll find me at the Palace with the King.

BERINGHEN

Shall I have guards?

BARADAS

No. Go alone. So draw
The least attention. Speed, but nonchalantly.
Let no man guess your errand. Casual
Your manner. Life and death walk with you, should
This be the packet. Fortune follow you.
[*Exit R.*]

BERINGHEN

[*Calling after him.*]
Heaven save me any other followers!
[*Exit L.B.*]
[*After a second, enter cautiously* DE MAUPRAT *L. He is looking across at R. and his hand is on his sword hilt.*]

[*Almost at once* FRANCOIS' *voice is heard calling breathlessly from L.*]

FRANCOIS

Messire de Mauprat!
[*Enter* FRANCOIS *L.*]

MAUPRAT

Well, what would you?

FRANCOIS

Sir,
I've hunted through all Paris for you.

MAUPRAT

[*Pointing R.*]

Wait!
Tell me who is the man walks there alone,
His back to us?

FRANCOIS

I think—Count Baradas.

MAUPRAT

At last I have him!

FRANCOIS

Sir—the lost dispatch!
But look at me. I serve the Cardinal.
You know me. Did you not keep guard last night
At Marion's?

MAUPRAT

I did. No matter now.
Unhand me.

FRANCOIS

Not until you give me back
The packet that you took from me.

MAUPRAT

The packet?
Now I remember, but what matters that?
It was but warning to the Cardinal
Of our designs against him. That's all past.
There walks his foe, our country's and most mine!
I have been hiding, waiting for him. Now—!

FRANCOIS

Give me the packet!

MAUPRAT

But I have it not.
It had no value, so a half hour later
I gave it to—

FRANCOIS

To whom?

MAUPRAT

To Huguet.

FRANCOIS

Huguet!
And he is in their hands, in the Bastille,
Thick walled, and iron barred, close guarded—

MAUPRAT

[*Pointing R.*]

Look!

He turns! He sees me!

FRANCOIS

He must not see me

With you!

[*Hides by wall, at left.*]

MAUPRAT

He's coming back!

BARADAS

[*Off R., calls.*]

Ho there, De Mauprat!

MAUPRAT

Count Baradas! We come to grips at last.
Unsheathe your sword, sharpen your skill, for here
[*Exit, continuing off R.*]
Alone we fight, my hate against your guile.

BARADAS

[*Off R., calling.*]
The guard!
[*Clash of swords off R. begins.*]

MAUPRAT

[*Off R.*]

No use! For you shall not escape.
I'll drive you from your reënforcement.

[*They enter fighting;* BARADAS *first, backing on stage as* DE MAUPRAT *drives him across toward L.B.*]

So. . . .

Never again shall you tell lies to women,
Be false to friend, betray your country. . . .

FRANCOIS

[*Who, fascinated, has watched the fight from near L.*]

Save,

Oh save yourself! The King!
[*Exit quickly L.*]

BARADAS

[*As they fight.*]

So—hear you that?

I called your name far less for salutation
Than as a warning!
[*Enter Guards R.*]

Warning just in time!

[*Guards seize* MAUPRAT.]

[*Enter* LOUIS *R. with* ORLEANS *and* CLERMONT. *Courtiers, ladies and other guards follow on from R. during scene.*]

LOUIS

What means this brawl? Swords drawn before our Palace!
Have our laws died with Richelieu?

BARADAS

My Liege,

My crime but self-defense. This man, De Mauprat—

LOUIS

So it is Mauprat! Dare he brave us now?

BARADAS

[*Giving one of the guards the writ.*]
Disarm him, then to the Bastille!

MAUPRAT

My Liege,
I beg you in the name of Richelieu—

BARADAS

'Tis vain to call upon the dead!
[*Enter L.B. on platform* RICHELIEU *with* JOSEPH.]

CLERMONT

Look there!

ORLEANS

The dead returned to life

BARADAS

It cannot be!

LOUIS

[*As* RICHELIEU *comes down steps.*]
What! A mock death! This tops the infinite
Of insult!

MAUPRAT

Cardinal, protect the right!

RICHELIEU

[*Taking writ from* GUARD.]
What's this?

BARADAS

Be firm, my Liege.

LOUIS

I have assumed
The sceptre. I shall wield it.

RICHELIEU

Faviaux!
High treason. Still that stale, outworn pretense!
My Liege, bad men—yes, Count, most knavish men—
Abuse your royal goodness. For this soldier
France has none braver, and his youth's hot folly
Misled—
[*Turns to* ORLEANS.]
—by whom your Highness may conjecture—
[*To* KING.]
Is long since cancelled by a loyal manhood.
I, Sire, have pardoned him.

LOUIS

And we do give
Your pardon to the winds.
[*To* GUARD.]
Sir, do your duty.

RICHELIEU

What, Sire? You do not know—oh, pardon me—

You know not yet that this brave honest heart
Stood between mine and murder! Sire, for my sake—
For your old servant's sake—undo this wrong.
See, let me rend the sentence.

LOUIS

At your peril!
You go too far!
[*To* GUARD.]
Again, sir, do your duty.

RICHELIEU

[*To* MAUPRAT.]
Speak not, but go. I would not see young Valor
So humbled as gray Service!

MAUPRAT

Fare you well.
Save Julie and console her.
[MAUPRAT, *under guard, exits L.B.*]

LOUIS

Julie!
[*Turns away.*]

ORLEANS

[*To* RICHELIEU.]
Sir,
No more of interruption!

BARADAS

[*Joining* ORLEANS.]
Yes, our King
Is much surprised at this, your interference.

RICHELIEU

Room, my lords, room! The Minister of France
Can need no intercession with his King.

LOUIS

What means this false report of death, my lord?

RICHELIEU

Are you then angered, Sire, that I still live?

LOUIS

No, but such artifice!

RICHELIEU

Not mine. Look elsewhere.
Louis, my palace swarmed with the assassins!

BARADAS

We've punished them already. Huguet lies
In the Bastille. My lord, see—*we* were prompt
To avenge you, *we* were—

RICHELIEU

We! I trust you hear,
My Liege.
[*To* BARADAS.]
What page, man, in the last court grammar,
Made you a plural? Count, you have seized the *hireling*.
[*To* LOUIS.]
Sire, shall I name the *master?* Loyalty
Masking disloyalty within.

LOUIS

I think
You talk of plots that you may so discredit
Your rivals.

RICHELIEU

Rivals, Sire, in what? Service
To France? I have no rivals there.

LOUIS

So proud?
Remember, sir, the hand that made can unmake!

RICHELIEU

Never! Your anger can annul my office,
Cancel my power, but not my name, my deeds.
From Kings, my Liege, I shall appeal to Time.
Revoke your trust in me, yet I shall leave you
Sole monarch of the mightiest realm in Europe,
Wealth, commerce, mastery. Be just. I know
Your smoother courtiers please you best, yet doubt
If statesmen rocked and dandled into power
Could leave such legacies to Kings.

BARADAS

If he,
The Cardinal, is loyal to the King
Why is not Julie at the Court?

LOUIS

Enough.
You must excuse a longer audience.

To your own palace! For our conference—this
Nor place nor time.

RICHELIEU

No time, no place but serves
For justice, Sire. Do you deny me justice?
[LOUIS *turns away to* BARADAS *and* ORLEANS.]
For fifteen years, while in these hands dwelt empire
The humblest citizen might ask for justice.
Not with the fawning tones and crawling mien
Of some I see around you—counts and princes—
Kneeling for favors; but erect and loud
As men who ask man's rights. My Liege, my Louis,
Do you refuse me justice—hearing, even—
In the pale presence of a thwarted murder?

LOUIS

My lord, you find me with my trusted friends,
My closest kindred. You would tear them from me—
Suggest they'd murder you, since me they love.
Enough of plots and treasons for one reign!
Home! Home! And sleep away these phantoms.

RICHELIEU

Sire,
Here from the foot of that high throne these hands
Have raised aloft, held steady by their strength,
Would you now cast aside the gray-haired man
Who gave you empire, and who sues for safety?

LOUIS

No. When we see your Eminence in truth

At the foot of the throne, we'll listen to you.
[*Exits R.B. followed by retinue.*]

BARADAS

[*As he follows, to* ORLEANS.]

Prince,
It seems the King will rule his realm himself.

RICHELIEU

My Lord de Baradas, I pray your pardon.
You will succeed me. May I grasp your hand?

BARADAS

Why—if you wish—

RICHELIEU

[*Taking* BARADAS' *hand.*]

'Tis as I thought. It trembles.
A single anxious moment—and it trembles!
The hand which holds the destiny of nations
Ought to shake less. Poor Baradas! Poor France!

BARADAS

Insolent!
[*Exits, R.B. with* ORLEANS.]

RICHELIEU

He can call *me* insolent!

JOSEPH

No more delay! You must accuse these traitors.
Francois could witness that De Baradas

Gave him a secret message for De Bouillon,
And told him life and death were there within.
Lay bare their plot—

RICHELIEU

Tush! Francois is my creature,
So they will say and laugh at me. My witness
Must be that same dispatch.

JOSEPH

Impossible.
Most like they have it.

RICHELIEU

Go. Fetch Marion.

JOSEPH

I've been there. She is seized, removed, imprisoned,
By the Count's orders. Sir, I told you this.

RICHELIEU

Why, so you did. My memory! I am old,
And aging years with each new moment now.
There's Francois—

JOSEPH

He has failed, as I foresaw.
He was too young.

RICHELIEU

So, Joseph, even you
Begin to doubt me. Nay, perchance with reason.

You are all loyalty and love, I know.
Oh France, my country, must you lose me now
When most you need me—
[*Enter* JULIE *from L.B.*]

JULIE

Father! Now I know
It was a lie, for you would not permit it.
They said that Adrien—

RICHELIEU

Now breaks my heart.

JULIE

Tell me the truth!

RICHELIEU

Those who insist on truth
Must outface fear. You ask me for your husband?
There, where the heavy clouds hang darkest over
The domes of the Bastille.

JULIE

The black Bastille!
But you can save him. You are Richelieu,
Lord Cardinal!

RICHELIEU

Ah, yesterday I was.
To-day—a very weak old man. To-morrow—
I know not what.

JULIE

You mean?

RICHELIEU

That at this moment
The lackey of the anteroom is not
More powerless than the Minister of France.
[*Enter* DURAN *R.B.*]

DURAN

Madame de Mauprat.

JULIE

Yes.

DURAN

[*To* RICHELIEU.]

Your Eminence—
I pray your pardon, since I seek this lady
Commanded by the King, who does require
Her instant presence at the Court.

JULIE

Father!

RICHELIEU

She shall not go.

DURAN

My lord, the King's command!

RICHELIEU

Go you to those who sent you—say you found

Her close upon my heart, as at an altar
And sheltered by the wings of sacred Rome.

DURAN

I am but messenger, my lord. The King,
Already roused against you, will not brook
Reply like this. He'll have his way—

JULIE

No, no!

DURAN

With your consent or lacking it. Failing
To warn you, I would be your foe.

RICHELIEU

All time
My foe if I, a priest, should cast her forth
From this, her only refuge.

DURAN

As you will.

[*Exit R.B.*]

JULIE

I might plead with the King for Adrien.
I'll go. I must not harm you, father.
[*Starts to follow* DURAN, *pauses.*]
No!
That room again! Alone. Waiting. And then
His creeping footsteps, rattle of the latch—
The closing door—his look—his hands! Oh God!
I cannot go. I cannot!

RICHELIEU

Look to her.
Her father loved me. She has loved me. Now—
All helpless I cannot repay their love,
Nor even shelter her. Can these be tears?
Oh, shame! Shame! Dotage!

JOSEPH

Tears are not for eyes
That rather need the lightning. Oft before
You've struck them unaware. The sun to-day
Must see this treason beaten, overcome,
Or shine upon your ruin.

RICHELIEU

Yes, and set—
Upon my corpse. I am not made to live;
Friends, glory, France, all taken from me. Yes.
To-day, I win—or die! Come, child. Come home,
Before another messenger arrives.

JOSEPH

Meanwhile the smoother course is best, my lord.
All sunshine, smiles, no hint of blacker clouds.
Until your thunder's ready.

RICHELIEU

We shall see.

[*Enter R.B.* BARADAS *and* CLERMONT.]

BARADAS

My lord, the King cannot believe your Eminence

So far forgets your duty and his greatness
As to resist his mandate.
[*To* JULIE.]
Pray you, Madame,
Obey your King.

JOSEPH
The smoother course!

JULIE
I'll go.

RICHELIEU
She shall not stir.

BARADAS
This is rebellion.

RICHELIEU
Call
It what you will.

BARADAS
You are not of her kindred—
She is an orphan.

RICHELIEU
France, then, is her mother.

BARADAS
The King is France. And his command is law.
Come, Madame—

RICHELIEU
No! You say the King is France!
There is a power beyond the power of kings!

Mark, where she stands. Around her now I draw
The awful circle of our solemn Church.
Set but a foot within that holy ground
And on your head—yes, though it wear a crown—
I launch the curse of Rome.

BARADAS

I dare not brave you.
I do but speak the orders of my King.
The Church—your rank—your very word, my lord,
Suffice you for resistance. Blame yourself
If it should cost you power.

RICHELIEU

That—*my* stake! Ah,
Dark gamester, what is yours? Look to it well.
Lose not a trick. By this same hour to-morrow
You shall have France, or I your head.

JOSEPH

Patience!

RICHELIEU

Leave patience to the saints, for I am human!
Did not your father die for France, poor child?
I love but you and France. I'm very feeble,
Of little use, it seems, to either now.
Well—come—we will—go home.

BARADAS

Indeed, my lord,
You do need rest. The burdens of the State
O'ertask your health.

RICHELIEU

[*To* JOSEPH.]

I'm patient. See?

BARADAS

[*To* CLERMONT.]

His mind

And life are breaking fast.

RICHELIEU

I heard you then.

If it be so, beware the falling ruins.
Walk blindfold on. Behind you stalks the headsman.
How pale he is! Joseph!
[*Collapses in* JOSEPH'S *arms.*]

Heaven save my country!

CURTAIN

SCENE III

It is the same setting, the gardens of the Louvre. An hour has elapsed since the previous scene.
At the rise of the curtain, the stage is empty, but almost at once two of the King's Guard saunter on from R.

1ST GUARD

You've heard the rumors?

2ND GUARD

Who has not? They say

The Cardinal is dying and disgraced.

1ST GUARD

He will be shorn of office and of power.

2ND GUARD

A mighty change. Small wonder that the King,
Too restless for the Palace, paces yonder—
Or sits, deep pondering, beside the pool,
Hid in the quiet of the trees, while we
Keep guard.

[*Enter L.B.* DE BERINGHEN, *hurrying across at back.*]

1ST GUARD

Ho, there!

2ND GUARD

Halt, sir!

BERINGHEN

Nay, halt me not!
From the Bastille I've hurried with such speed
I'm out of breath. Gad, how I hate to hurry!
I'm needed at the Palace—mission most
Important—so important I shall scarce
Breathe easy until it is done with.

2ND GUARD

[*To* 1ST GUARD.]

'Tis
Messire de Beringhen!

1ST GUARD

[*To* DE BERINGHEN.]

Your pardon, sir!
Pass freely.

BERINGHEN

Thanks.

1ST GUARD

[*As* FRANCOIS *enters L.B. hurrying.*]
But wait, who follows you?

BERINGHEN

Does some one follow? Ah, the courier!
Praise heaven, it's only you! My heart, it skipped
But now a dozen beats.

1ST GUARD

[*To* BERINGHEN.]
You know him then?

2ND GUARD

Our orders are most strict.

BERINGHEN

I'll answer for him.
He's scarce a thing to dread. But look at him!
He is no Hercules.

1ST GUARD

Nay, you are right.
[*Exit R., laughing.*]

2ND GUARD

He looks not dangerous!
[*Exit R., laughing.*]

BERINGHEN

Listen, young sir,
I would have company—yes, even yours.
Mark you, I'm brave in battle. But, with spies
On every side, to walk alone—the while
I bear the thing they'd give their hearts' blood for,
Spill mine too gladly—there's a task to freeze
One's soul!

FRANCOIS

You have it, then? The lost dispatch?

BERINGHEN

Be quiet! Hush! How knew you that?

FRANCOIS

I guessed
This Huguet somehow held it, strove to pry
My way to him. With each rebuff I tried once more,
Till at the last, outside the Bastille gates,
I saw you enter, guessed your errand, guessed
As well its sure success, so followed you
And, watching, saw you held your arm across
Your breast protectingly—so guessed you bore
It there.

BERINGHEN

You guess too well for one so young.

FRANCOIS

Sir, give it me, that I may leap to horse
And ride for the frontier—so lose no time—

BERINGHEN

Nay, not so fast. Nor yet so close. 'Twill take
But little time to find the Count.

FRANCOIS

Each hour
Is vital when so many have been lost.
Count Baradas may be away.

BERINGHEN

The Count
Is with the King. The King is at the Palace.
Ergo, young sir, the Count is at the Palace.
Now there's ripe wisdom! Come!

FRANCOIS

[*Drawing dagger and following.*]

Listen to me.
Of all the gold they've promised me you shall
Have half, if now—

BERINGHEN

Put by the dagger!

FRANCOIS

Sir,
I've worn it in my hand from the Bastille.
I would protect the packet with my life,
Since, lacking it, my life is forfeit!

BERINGHEN

True.
Yet put it by! I like its look but little.
Come, we will journey to the Palace.

FRANCOIS

I
Will follow you, sir.

BERINGHEN

[*Drawing sword.*]

No. You'll march ahead.
You've followed me already far enough,
And hold your hand from off your dagger's hilt,
Unless there's need for it, which heaven forfend!

FRANCOIS

I must not fail! There's no such word as fail!

BERINGHEN

Talk not of failure. You will gain your goal,
Unless the Count should choose a grown-up man
Instead of just a boy to ride for him.
[*Prods* FRANCOIS *on towards R.*]
Keep close watch now among the trees. I trust
Not even the King's gardens to be free
Of friends of Richelieu.
[*Exit following* FRANCOIS *at R.B.*]
[*Almost at once enter hurriedly from R.* ORLEANS *and* CLERMONT.]

ORLEANS

Clermont, wait yonder.

CLERMONT

At your command, my Prince.
[*Crosses up to L.B., and exit.*]

ORLEANS

[*Anxiously returning to R. entrance.*]
Come, Baradas.

BARADAS

[*Entering, looking off R.*]
I must not leave the King too long alone.
I've sent for Mauprat. They will bring him here.
If search discovers nothing—threats of death,
Then promises, I care not what, until
He traces the dispatch.

ORLEANS

The courier?
You have not seen him?

BARADAS

No.

ORLEANS

A valiant lad!
I have high hopes of him. And Beringhen?

BARADAS

He should be here and soon. Wait! I forgot.
I told him join us at the Palace. Prince,

At first chance, take Duran aside, send him
To the Palace, have him find De Beringhen
And fetch him here.

ORLEANS

Duran is with the King,
But I shall tell him. What of Richelieu?

BARADAS

His power is gone, and power for him was life.
I fear him little now.
[*Enter two guards from R.*]

2ND GUARD

The King returns.

IST GUARD

[*To* 2ND GUARD.]
Stay you on this side. I shall be beyond.
[*Crosses to L.*]
[*Enter* LOUIS, *R., followed by* DURAN. *The two guards bow, then exit R. and L.*]

LOUIS

I have decided. He'd forbid your presence,
My brother—yours, my friend—then Julie, too—
Thwarts, braves, defies—
[*To* BARADAS.]
We make you minister!
[*To* ORLEANS.]
Gaston, for you—the baton of our armies!
You love me, do you not?

ORLEANS

Oh—love you, Sire?
Never so much as now!

BARADAS

May I deserve
Your trust—as long as you are King.
[*Crossing to* LOUIS.]
My Liege,
My first advice as minister is this:
At Faviaux, De Mauprat was a traitor.
An hour ago he sought to murder me.
His death deserved, he should be sentenced.
[*His hand on* LOUIS' *arm.*]
Sire,
If Julie should decide to save his life,
Give you her love, you could be merciful,
Pardon De Mauprat, should that be your will.

LOUIS

Your first advice seems shrewd. You may prepare
The warrant for De Mauprat's death. No need
To urge it to effect.

BARADAS

No haste, my Liege,
Unless some sudden cause demand it.

IST GUARD

[*Entering L., speaks to* BARADAS.]
Sir,

The Chevalier de Mauprat under guard
Is here at your command from the Bastille.

BARADAS

In just a moment.
[*Exit* GUARD.]

LOUIS

Mauprat! Here!

BARADAS

I sent
For him to question him as to his share
In that amusing, so-called murder plot
Against the Cardinal.

LOUIS

Ah, Richelieu!
The very mention of his name brings back
My doubts and worries. Name him not again.
I'm done with Richelieu!

CLERMONT

[*Entering L.B.*]
My Liege.

LOUIS

Clermont?

CLERMONT

The Lady Julie, Sire, implores an audience.

LOUIS

Bring her to me at once!

CLERMONT

At once, my Liege!

[*Exit.*]

ORLEANS

You need Duran and me no longer, Sire?

LOUIS

Not just at present.

ORLEANS

Come, Duran.

[*They bow to* LOUIS.]

My Liege.

[*Exeunt R.B.*]

LOUIS

Julie at last, repentant of her folly!

BARADAS

[*From L.*]

Is it repentance, Sire, or does she come
For Mauprat's pardon?

LOUIS

If for that, my friend,
I'll not be gentle. You are minister.
We leave to you our answer.

[*Enter* JULIE *L.B.*]

JULIE

Oh, my Liege,
You sent for me and I refused, was wrong,
For I have harmed that good, great, dying man,

The Cardinal. Blame me, not him. I plead
That you be just!

BARADAS

The King is ever just,
Too kind, forgiving.
[*Exit L.*]

LOUIS

So, it is to plead
For Richelieu you've come to me.

JULIE

For more!
Oh, how much more! My husband's freedom. Sire,
Last night you told me that you loved me.

LOUIS

Yes,
Too much to let you go.

JULIE

You wrong yourself.

LOUIS

High sacrifice is not a fault of kings.

JULIE

A single life. When you rule millions! What
Is one man's life to you? And yet to me—
'Tis France, 'tis earth, 'tis everything! Oh, Sire,
I fear for him, for he has enemies
About you. Tell me he is safe. Just that.

'Tis little.

[*Reënter* BARADAS *L.*]

He has erred, then punish him.
Nay, banish him from out your kingdom. Let
Me follow him—forgotten—

LOUIS

Speak to her.
I am not heartless. Give her hope.

BARADAS

[*To* JULIE.]

There is
One way De Mauprat's safety can be sure.

LOUIS

Yes. Talk to Baradas. Annul your marriage.

JULIE

Not be *his* bride!

LOUIS

A form, a mere decorum.
You know how much I love you.

JULIE

Sire!

LOUIS

I leave
You with him. Be advised. Then come to me.
I shall be waiting.

[*Exit R.B.*]

BARADAS

Well?

JULIE

You were his friend.

BARADAS

Before I loved you. Hear me. I am young,
Well-born, and brave as Mauprat. For your sake
I peril what he has not—fortune, power.
You shall not be a king's, except as queen,
My queen, when I shall sit upon *his* throne.
De Mauprat safe, rule France with me!

JULIE

You would
Betray your king as well! I'll call to him,
Unmask you—

BARADAS

He will not believe you. He,
The King, already has decreed the death
Of Mauprat.

JULIE

Adrien! My husband! Death!

BARADAS

And you can save him—oh, how easily!
To you I seem all black. But many men
Have been more villainous with lesser cause.
Ambition, love. For these two things alone
I've slaved, slain scruple, sacrificed my soul.

My star is at its zenith—Julie, you
The shining of that star.

JULIE

And must I choose
Between his death and you? Have mercy, sir,
I beg.

BARADAS

[*Clapping his hands.*]
I'll help you to your choice.
[*Enter L.* MAUPRAT *with Bastille Guard*]
Shall this
Be your last sight of him?

JULIE

Oh, Adrien!
[*Turns to* BARADAS.]
I will do anything, be anything
That he may live—

BARADAS

[*His arms about her.*]
You see, De Mauprat?

JULIE

No!
Death would be better—death for both of us!
Life at the best is short. Love is immortal.
If you must die to-night, my Adrien,
I too at the same hour shall die!

MAUPRAT

Brave Julie!
You see, Count Baradas.

BARADAS

Ambition, love.
But always first ambition, I confess.
[*To* MAUPRAT.]
If you will say where lies, who holds the packet
You shall be free, have Julie, honors, all
Your heart can ask for.

MAUPRAT

No. I'll tell you nothing.

BARADAS

[*To* GUARD.]
Take him—first to the rack. There in his anguish,
He'll tell what he might have reward for telling.

JULIE

Have you no pity?

BARADAS

None.
[*To* GUARD.]
Then to the headsman!
[*Enter R.B.* CLERMONT, *hurrying.*]

CLERMONT

My lord—the Cardinal—

BARADAS

Richelieu! Go
Summon the King!

[*Enter R.B.* RICHELIEU, *leaning on* JOSEPH, *and followed by Secretaries of State.*]

Summon as well the guard,
The King's own guard, to hem about his person,
Surround him and protect him here—

RICHELIEU

From one
Infirm old man, unarmed, and unattended?

JULIE

Now can we hope again! Oh, father, say
That Adrien shall live!

RICHELIEU

I scarce may live
Myself, yet should my last breath be a prayer
For you. Count Baradas, you soon will hold
All that I held on earth. One final boon,
This soldier's life.

BARADAS

I cannot lose one trick.
Such was your warning. Thus, my answer—no.
[*To Bastille guard.*]
Sir, take De Mauprat back to prison.

JULIE

No!

[*Enter R.B.* LOUIS, *accompanied by the King's Guards.*]

RICHELIEU

[*To Bastille guard.*]
Stay, sir, a single moment!
[*To* LOUIS.]
My good Liege,
Your worn-out servant, willing, Sire, to spare you
Some pain of conscience, would forestall your wishes.
I do resign my office.

MAUPRAT

You?

JULIE

All's over!

LOUIS

Count Baradas is Minister. Prince Orleans
Commands our armies.

RICHELIEU

What, already?

LOUIS

Yes.
But we shall say that you resigned.

RICHELIEU

My thanks.
My end draws near. A single final favor.

BARADAS

It is too late. I have refused, my Liege.

RICHELIEU

I do not ask his life. Let him remain
Till our short conference is over. Then
For Julie's sake, let me dismiss his soul,
Charged with an old man's blessing.

LOUIS

Surely.

BARADAS

Sire!

LOUIS

A trifling favor to a dying servant.
[*Seats himself on seat at R.*]

RICHELIEU

You would consign your armies to the baton
Of your most honored brother. Sire, so be it.
Your minister, the Count de Baradas,
A most sagacious choice! Your Secretaries
Of State attend me, Sire, to render up
The ledgers of the realm. I do beseech you
Suffer these noble gentlemen to learn
The nature of the glorious task that waits them,
Here in my presence.

LOUIS

You say well, my lord.

RICHELIEU

[*Showing weakness, leans on* JOSEPH.]
I faint. Air—air!

BARADAS

My Liege, the man is dying!

LOUIS

[*To* GUARD *at L.*]
Sir, look to him.

RICHELIEU

Forgive me, it will pass.
[JOSEPH *and* GUARD *assist him to seat at L.*]

LOUIS

[*To Secretaries.*]
Approach, sirs.

1ST SECRETARY

The affairs of Portugal,
Most urgent, Sire. One short month since the Duc Braganza was a rebel.

LOUIS

And is still.

1ST SECRETARY

No, Sire, he has succeeded! He is now
Crowned King of Portugal—craves instant aid
Against the arms of Spain.

LOUIS

We will not grant it,
Against his lawful king. Eh, Count?

BARADAS

No, Sire.

1ST SECRETARY

But Spain is your most deadly foe. Whatever
Can weaken Spain must strengthen France. The Cardinal
Would send this aid—the balance, Sire, of Europe.

LOUIS

The Cardinal? Balance? We'll consider. Eh, Count?

BARADAS

Yes, Sire.
[*To* SECRETARY.]
Fall back.

1ST SECRETARY

But—

BARADAS

Oh, fall back, sir!

JOSEPH

Humph!
[DURAN *has entered and now whispers to* BARADAS.]

2ND SECRETARY

The affairs of England, Sire, most urgent. Charles
The First has lost a battle that decides
One half his realm—craves money, help.

LOUIS

He shall
Have both. Eh, Baradas?

BARADAS

Yes, Sire.

RICHELIEU

My Liege,
Forgive me. Charles's cause is lost. A man
Named Cromwell risen. A great man. Your help
Would fail—your loans be squandered! Pause. Reflect!

LOUIS

Reflect, eh, Baradas?

BARADAS

Reflect, Sire.

JOSEPH

Humph!

LOUIS

Round me thrones totter, dynasties dissolve.
Come, Baradas, prove now your new-found power,
Decide for me.

BARADAS

Your Majesty, in time
All these affairs will settle.

JOSEPH

Humph, in time!

RICHELIEU

Peace, Joseph!

BARADAS

[*To* 2ND SECRETARY.]
Back, sir!

2ND SECRETARY

But—

BARADAS

Fall back, I say!

3RD SECRETARY

The secret correspondence, Sire, most urgent;
Accounts of spies, deserters, heretics,
Assassins, poisoners—

RICHELIEU

Schemes against yourself!

LOUIS

Against myself? Most urgent.

RICHELIEU

[*Rising.*]
Yes. *Most* urgent.
In that portfolio there is much to daunt you.
And yet I tell you, Sire, they are but trifling
Compared with one stray parchment. . . .

LOUIS

Stray? You mean—
It is not here?

RICHELIEU

No, Sire. Addressed to Bouillon
And signed by enemies unguessed.

BARADAS

My Liege!

RICHELIEU

It strikes at you, would take away your throne,
Such is the missing paper.

ORLEANS

Missing!

RICHELIEU

Yes.
Missing—from the portfolio!
[*Produces packet.*]
Sire, read this.
Then take the Count's advice upon it.
[*Starts to cross to King.*]

BARADAS

Wait!
The King agreed to hear the Secretaries,
No more. So he will not receive it!

RICHELIEU

What!
Can this be something you would wish he failed
To see?

ORLEANS

His Majesty should not be bothered!

RICHELIEU

And you feel sure that this would—*bother* him?

BARADAS

[*Reaching for paper, as* RICHELIEU *comes nearer to the King.*]

Come—I will read it to the King aloud.

RICHELIEU

You think this page might blind His Majesty?
It might help him to see.

LOUIS

[*Rising.*]

Enough of this.
Give me the parchment.

ORLEANS

Sire!

BARADAS

My Liege, the thing
Is forgery.

LOUIS

[*Who has opened packet.*]

A blank and empty page!

RICHELIEU

Yes, blank—to make them prove their guilt to you.

A forgery? Of what, Count Baradas?
How hangdog now who guilty looked before!

BARADAS

A specious trick, my Liege. . . .

LOUIS

Guilty of what,
Lord Cardinal?

RICHELIEU

Connection with a treason
That packet, had it been the real one, proved.

CLERMONT

A lie!

BARADAS

I ask, my Liege, that he produce
The packet he describes so glibly.

ORLEANS

Yes.
Where is your proof?

FRANCOIS

[*Entering R.B., and struggling with* GUARD.]
My lord!

ORLEANS

[*Hopefully, to* BARADAS.]
The Courier!

BARADAS

[*To* GUARD.]

Release him. Let him come to us. My Liege,
A trusted courier. . . .

FRANCOIS

[*Throwing himself at* RICHELIEU'S *feet, and giving him the dispatch.*]

Lord Cardinal!
I have not failed!

RICHELIEU

A courier? Not so.
He is my page-boy, Count. Now, Louis, read—
This time no empty page!

BARADAS

My Liege, delay!

JOSEPH

Fall back, my son. Fall back. 'Tis your turn now.

RICHELIEU

[*As* BARADAS *and the others try to rush out.*]
Let none escape.
[*The guards stop* BARADAS *and the others.*]
Sire, read that I may hear
While yet I live. . . .

LOUIS

[*Reading the dispatch.*]
To Bouillon—and signed Orleans—
Baradas, too! League with our foes of Spain,

Lead our Italian armies—What! To Paris!—
Capture the King—my health requires repose—
Make me subscribe my proper abdication—
Orleans, my brother, regent. Saints of heaven!
These are the men I loved.

JOSEPH

[*As* RICHELIEU *suddenly collapses.*]
See to the Cardinal!

BARADAS

[*In the hands of the Guards.*]
My Liege, I tell you it is forgery!

LOUIS

[*Crossing to* RICHELIEU.]
Richelieu! Lord Cardinal! 'Tis I resign!
Reign you instead!

JOSEPH

Alas! Too late!

LOUIS

Reign, Richelieu!

RICHELIEU

[*Weakly.*]
With absolute power?

LOUIS

Most absolute. Oh, live,
If not for me, for France!

RICHELIEU

[*More strongly.*]

France!

LOUIS

Ah, this treason!
The armies—Orleans—Bouillon! Heavens, the Spaniards!
Where will they be next week?

RICHELIEU

[*With new power.*]

Here—at my feet!
[*To* 1ST SECRETARY.]
Ere the clock strike, the envoys have their answer.
[*To* 3RD SECRETARY, *with ring from finger.*]
This to De Chavigny. He knows the rest.
No need of parchment here. He must not halt
For sleep—for food. In *my* name—*mine*—he will
Arrest the Duc de Bouillon at the head
Of his army.
[*To* BARADAS.]
Baradas, you've lost your trick.
Away with him and Orleans, Clermont, all!
[*Exeunt* BARADAS *and the others with Guards.*]
Francois, brave boy! Never say fail again.
Joseph, perhaps he'll be a bishop, too.

JOSEPH

Ah, Cardinal!

RICHELIEU

Ah, Joseph! Bishop Joseph!
De Mauprat. Set him free.
[GUARD *looses* MAUPRAT'S *arms.*]
Julie, cling close
To him. Ah, golden youth! Kneel to your King.
[*To* LOUIS.]
Sire, give to them your blessing.

LOUIS

Cardinal—
For Mauprat's pardon—well. But Julie, sir—
Leave me one thing to love!

RICHELIEU

A subject's luxury.
Yet—if you must love something, Sire, love me,
No woman half so faithful.

LOUIS

[*To kneeling couple.*]
Rise—be happy.
[*To* RICHELIEU.]
One moment makes a startling cure, Lord Cardinal.

RICHELIEU

Yes, Sire—for in one moment there did pass
Into this withered frame the might of France.
We lonely priests to whom the Church forbids
The woman-mate and children, we are yet
Not holier than humanity, and must

Fulfill humanity's condition—Love.
So I have loved. My mate is France. Beyond
The map of France my heart can travel not.
And while I live, Richelieu and France are one.

CURTAIN

APPENDIX

RICHELIEU;

OR,

THE CONSPIRACY.

by

SIR EDWARD BULWER-LYTTON

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

LOUIS THE THIRTEENTH.

GASTON, DUKE OF ORLEANS, *brother to Louis XIII.*

BARADAS, *favourite of the King, First Gentleman of the Chamber, Premier Ecuyer, &c.*

CARDINAL RICHELIEU.

THE CHEVALIER DE MAUPRAT.

THE SIEUR DE BERINGHEN, *in attendance on the King, one of the Conspirators.*

JOSEPH, *a Capuchin, Richelieu's confidant.*

HUGUET, *an officer of Richelieu's household guard—a Spy.*

FRANCOIS, *First Page to Richelieu.*

FIRST COURTIER.

CAPTAIN OF THE ARCHERS.

FIRST, SECOND, THIRD SECRETARIES OF STATE.

GOVERNOR OF THE BASTILLE.

GAOLER.

Courtiers, Pages, Conspirators, Officers, Soldiers, &c.

JULIE DE MORTEMAR, *an Orphan, ward to Richelieu.*

MARION DE LORME, *Mistress to Orleans, but in Richelieu's pay.*

RICHELIEU;

OR,

THE CONSPIRACY.

ACT I.

FIRST DAY

SCENE I.—*A room in the house of* MARION DE LORME; *a table towards the front of the stage (with wine, fruits, &c.), at which are seated* BARADAS, Four Courtiers, *splendidly dressed in the costume of* 1641-2;—*the* DUKE OF ORLEANS *reclining on a large fauteuil;*—MARION DE LORME *standing at the back of his chair, offers him a goblet, and then retires. At another table,* DE BERINGHEN, DE MAUPRAT, *playing at dice; other* Courtiers, *of inferior rank to those at the table of the* Duke, *looking on.*

Orle. [*drinking*]. Here's to our enterprise!
Bar. [*glancing at* MARION]. Hush, sir!
Orle. [*aside*]. Nay, Count,
You may trust her; she doats on me; no house
So safe as Marion's *[At our statelier homes
The very walls do play the eaves-dropper.
There's not a sunbeam creeping o'er our floors
But seems a glance from that malignant eye
Which reigns o'er France; our fatal greatness lives
In the sharp glare of one relentless day.
But Richelieu's self forgets to fear the sword
The myrtle hides; and Marion's silken robe

* The passages enclosed in brackets are omitted in representation.

Casts its kind charity o'er fiercer sins
Than those which haunt the rosy path between
The lip and eye of beauty.—Oh, no house
So safe as Marion's.]
Bar. Still, we have a secret.
And oil and water—woman and a secret—
Are hostile properties.
Orle. Well—Marion, see
How the play prospers yonder.
[MARION *goes to the next table, looks on for a few moments then exit.*
Bar. [*producing a parchment*]. I have now
All the conditions drawn; it only needs
Our signatures: upon receipt of this,
(Whereto is join'd the schedule of our treaty
With the Count-Duke, the Richelieu of the Escurial,)
Bouillon will join his army with the Spaniard,
March on to Paris,—there, dethrone the King:
You will be Regent; I, and ye, my Lords,
Form the new Council. So much for the core
Of our great scheme.
Orle. But Richelieu is an Argus;
One of his hundred eyes will light upon us,
And then—good-bye to life.
Bar. To gain the prize
We must destroy the Argus:—ay, my Lords,
The scroll the core, but blood must fill the veins,
Of our design;—while this despatch'd to Bouillon,
Richelieu despatch'd to heaven!—The last *my* charge.
Meet here to-morrow night. *You,* sir, as first,
In honour and in hope, meanwhile select
Some trusty knave to bear the scroll to Bouillon;
Midst Richelieu's foes *I'll* find some desperate hand
To strike for vengeance, while we stride to power.
Orle. So be it;—to-morrow, midnight. Come, my Lords.

[*Exeunt* ORLEANS, *and the* Courtiers *in his train. Those at the other table rise, salute* ORLEANS, *and reseat themselves.*

De Ber. Double the stakes.

De Mau. Done.

De Ber. Bravo; faith, it shames me
To bleed a purse already *in extremis.*

De Mau. Nay, as you've had the patient to yourself
So long, no other doctor should despatch it.

[DE MAUPRAT *throws and loses.*

Omnes. Lost! Ha, ha!—poor De Mauprat!

De Ber. One throw more?

De Mau. No; I am bankrupt [*pushing gold*]. There goes all—except
My honour and my sword. [*They rise.*

De Ber. Long cloaks and honour
Went out of vogue together, when we found
We got on much more rapidly without them;
The sword, indeed, is never out of fashion,—
The devil has care of *that.*

First Gamester. Ay, take the sword
To Cardinal Richelieu:—he gives gold for steel,
When worn by brave men.

De Mau. Richelieu!

De Ber. [*to* BARADAS]. At that name
He changes colour, bites his nether lip.
Ev'n in his brightest moments whisper "Richelieu,"
And you cloud all his sunshine.

Bar. I have mark'd it,
And I will learn the wherefore.

De Mau. The Egyptian
Dissolved her richest jewel in a draught:
Would I could so melt time and all its treasures,
And drain it thus. [*Drinking.*

De Ber. Come, gentlemen, what say ye,

A walk on the parade?

Omnes. Ay; come, De Mauprat.

De Mau. Pardon me; we shall meet again ere nightfall.

Bar. I'll stay and comfort Mauprat.

De Ber. Comfort!—when
We gallant fellows have run out a friend,
There's nothing left—except to run him through!
There's the last act of friendship.

De Mau. Let me keep
That favour in reserve; in all beside
Your most obedient servant.

[*Exeunt* De Beringhen, *&c.* *Manent* De Mauprat *and* Baradas.

Bar. You have lost—
You are not sad.

De Mau. Sad!—Life and gold have wings,
And must fly one day:—open, then, their cages
And wish them merry.

Bar. You're a strange enigma:—
Fiery in war—and yet to glory lukewarm;
All mirth in action—in repose all gloom—
These are extremes in which the unconscious heart
Betrays the fever of deep-fix'd disease.
Confide in me! our young days roll'd together
In the same river, glassing the same stars
That smile i' the heaven of hope;—alike we made
Bright-wingèd steeds of our unform'd chimeras,
Spurring the fancies upward to the air,
Wherein we shaped fair castles from the cloud.
Fortune of late has sever'd us—and led
Me to the rank of Courtier, Count and Favourite,—
You to the titles of the wildest gallant
And bravest knight in France;—are you content?
No;—trust in me—some gloomy secret——

De Mau. Ay:—

A secret that doth haunt me, as, of old,
Men were possess'd of fiends!—Where'er I turn,
The grave yawns dark before me!—I *will* trust you;—
Hating the Cardinal, and beguiled by Orleans,
You know I join'd the Languedoc revolt—
Was captured—sent to the Bastille——
Bar. But shared
The general pardon, which the Duke of Orleans
Won for himself and all in the revolt,
Who but obey'd his orders.
De Mau. Note the phrase;—
"Obey'd his orders." Well, when on my way
To join the duke in Languedoc, I (then
The down upon my lip—less man than boy)
Leading young valours—reckless as myself,
Seized on the town of Faviaux, and displaced
The royal banners for the rebel. Orleans
(Never too daring,) when I reach'd the camp,
Blamed me for acting—mark—*without his orders:*
Upon this quibble Richelieu razed my name
Out of the general pardon.
Bar. Yet released you
From the Bastille——
De Mau. To call me to his presence,
And thus address me:—"You have seized a town
Of France, without the orders of your leader,
And for this treason, but one sentence—DEATH."
Bar. Death!
De Mau. "I have pity on your youth and birth,
Nor wish to glut the headsman;—join your troop,
Now on the march against the Spaniards;—change
The traitor's scaffold for the soldier's grave;—
Your memory stainless—they who shared your crime
Exiled or dead—your King shall never learn it."
Bar. O tender pity!—O most charming prospect!

Blown into atoms by a bomb, or drill'd
Into a cullender by gunshot!—Well?—
De Mau. You have heard if I fought bravely.—Death became
Desired as Daphne by the eager Daygod.
Like him I chased the nymph—to grasp the laurel!
I could not die!
Bar. Poor fellow!
De Mau. When the Cardinal
Review'd the troops—his eye met mine;—he frown'd,
Summon'd me forth—"How's this?" quoth he; "you have shunn'd
The sword—beware the axe!—'twill fall one day!"
He left me thus—we were recall'd to Paris,
And—you know all!
Bar. And, knowing this, why halt you,
Spell'd by the rattle-snake,—while in the breasts
Of your firm friends beat hearts, that vow the death
Of your grim tyrant?—Wake!—Be one of us;
The time invites—the King detests the Cardinal,
Dares not disgrace—but groans to be deliver'd
Of that too great a subject—join your friends,
Free France, and save yourself.
De Mau. Hush! Richelieu bears
A charmèd life;—to all, who have braved his power,
One common end—the block.
Bar. Nay, if he live,
The block your doom;—
De Mau. Better the victim, Count,
Than the assassin.—France requires a Richelieu,
But does not need a Mauprat. Truce to this;—
All time one midnight, where my thoughts are spectres.
What to my fame?—What love?—
Bar. Yet dost thou love *not?*
De Mau. Love?—I am young——

Bar. And Julie fair! [*Aside.*] It is so,
Upon the margin of the grave—his hand
Would pluck the rose that I would win and wear!
[*Aloud.*]—[Thou lov'st—
De Mau. Who, lonely in the midnight tent,
Gazed on the watch-fires in the sleepless air,
Nor chose one star amidst the clustering hosts
To bless it in the name of some fair face
Set in his spirit, as that star in Heaven?
For our divine affections, like the spheres,
More ever, ever musical.
Bar. You speak
As one who fed on poetry.
De Mau. Why, man,
The thoughts of lovers stir with poetry
As leaves with summer-wind.—The heart that loves
Dwells in an Eden, hearing angel-lutes,
As Eve in the First Garden. Hast thou seen
My Julie, and not felt it henceforth dull
To live in the common world—and talk in words
That clothe the feelings of the frigid herd?—
Upon the perfumed pillow of her lips—
As on his native bed of roses flushed
With Paphian skies—Love smiling sleeps:—Her voice
The blest interpreter of thoughts as pure
As virgin wells where Dian takes delight,
Or fairies dip their changelings!—In the maze
Of her harmonious beauties—Modesty
(Like some severer grace that leads the choir
Of her sweet sisters) every airy motion
Attunes to such chaste charm, that Passion holds
His burning breath, and will not with a sigh
Dissolve the spell that binds him!—Oh those eyes
That woo the earth—shadowing more soul than lurks
Under the lids of Psyche!—Go!—thy lip

Curls at the purfled phrases of a lover—
Love thou, and if thy love be deep as mine,
Thou wilt not laugh at poets.
Bar. [*aside*]. With each word
Thou wak'st a jealous demon in my heart,
And my hand clutches at my hilt.—]
De Mau. [*gaily*]. No more!—
I love!—Your breast holds both my secrets!—Never
Unbury either!—Come, while yet we may,
We'll bask us in the noon of rosy life:—
Lounge through the gardens,—flaunt it in the taverns,—
Laugh,—game,—drink,—feast:—If so confined my days,
Faith, I'll enclose the nights—Pshaw! not so grave;
I'm a true Frenchman!—*Vive la bagatelle!*

[*As they are going out, enter* HUGUET *and four* Arquebusiers.

Hug. Messire De Mauprat,—I arrest you!—Follow
To the Lord Cardinal.
De Mau. You see, my friend,
I'm out of my suspense!—the tiger's play'd
Long enough with his prey.—Farewell!—Hereafter
Say, when men name me, "Adrien de Mauprat
Lived without hope, and perish'd without fear!"

[*Exeunt* DE MAUPRAT, HUGUET, *&c.*

Bar. Farewell!—I trust for ever! I design'd thee
For Richelieu's murderer——but as well his martyr!
In childhood you the stronger—and I cursed you;
In youth the fairer—and I cursed you still;
And now my rival!—While the name of Julie
Hung on thy lips—I smiled—for then I saw,
In my mind's eye, the cold and grinning Death
Hang o'er thy head the pall!—Ambition, Love,
Ye twin-born stars of daring destinies,
Sit in my house of Life!—By the king's aid
I will be Julie's husband—in despite

Of my Lord Cardinal!—by the king's aid
I will be minister of France—in spite
Of my Lord Cardinal!—And then—what then?
The king loves Julie—feeble prince—false master—
[*Producing and gazing on the parchment.*
Then, by the aid of Bouillon, and the Spaniard,
I will dethrone the king; and all—ha!—ha!—
All in despite of my Lord Cardinal! [*Exit.*

SCENE II.

A room in the Palais Cardinal, the walls hung with arras. A large screen in one corner. A table covered with books, papers, &c. A rude clock in a recess. Busts, statues, book-cases, weapons of different periods and banners suspended over RICHELIEU'S *chair.*

RICHELIEU *and* JOSEPH.

Rich. And so you think this new conspiracy
The craftiest trap yet laid for the old fox?——
Fox!—Well, I like the nickname! What did Plutarch
Say of the Greek Lysander?
Joseph. I forget.
Rich. That where the lion's skin fell short, he eked it
Out with the fox's! A great statesman, Joseph,
That same Lysander!
Joseph. Orleans heads the traitors.
Rich. A very wooden head, then! Well?
Joseph. The favourite,
Count Baradas—
Rich. A weed of hasty growth;

First gentleman of the chamber—titles, lands,
And the king's ear!—It cost me six long winters
To mount as high, as in six little moons
This painted lizard——But I hold the ladder,
And when I shake—he falls! What more?
Joseph. A scheme
To make your orphan-ward an instrument
To aid your foes. You placed her with the queen,
One of the royal chamber,—as a watch
I' th' enemy's quarters—
Rich. And the silly child
Visits me daily,—calls me "Father,"—prays
Kind Heaven to bless me—And for all the rest
As well have placed a doll about the queen!
She does not heed who frowns—who smiles; with whom
The king confers in whispers; notes not when
Men who last week were foes, are found in corners
Mysteriously affectionate; words spoken
Within closed doors she never hears;—by chance
Taking the air at keyholes—Senseless puppet!
No ears—nor eyes!—and yet she says, "She loves me!"
Go on——
Joseph. Your ward has charm'd the king——
Rich. Out on you!
Have I not, one by one, from such fair shoots
Pluck'd the insidious ivy of his love?
And shall it creep around my blossoming tree
Where innocent thoughts, like happy birds, make music
That spirits in Heaven might hear? They're sinful, too,
Those passionate surfeits of the rampant flesh,
The church condemns them; and to us, my Joseph,
The props and pillars of the church, most hurtful.
The king is weak—whoever the king loves
Must rule the king; the lady loves another,
The other rules the lady—thus we're balk'd

Of our own proper sway—The king must have
No goddess but the State:—the State—that's Richelieu!
Joseph. This not the worst;—Louis, in all decorous,
And deeming you her least compliant guardian,
Would veil his suit by marriage with his minion,
Your prosperous foe, Count Baradas!
Rich. Ha! ha!
I have another bride for Baradas.
Joseph. You, my lord?
Rich. Ay—more faithful than the love
Of fickle woman:—when the head lies lowliest,
Clasping him fondest;—Sorrow never knew
So sure a soother,—and her bed is stainless!
Joseph [*aside*]. If of the grave he speaks, I do not wonder
That priests are bachelors!

Enter FRANÇOIS.

Fran. Mademoiselle de Mortemar.
Rich. Most opportune—admit her. [*Exit* FRANÇOIS.
In my closet
You'll find a rosary, Joseph; ere you tell
Three hundred beads, I'll summon you. Stay, Joseph;—
I did omit an Ave in my matins,—
A grievous fault;—atone it for me, Joseph;
There is a scourge within; I am weak, you strong.
It were but charity to take my sin
On such broad shoulders. Exercise is healthful.
Joseph. I! guilty of such criminal presumption
As to mistake myself for you—No, never!
Think it not! [*Aside.*] Troth, a pleasant invitation!
[*Exit* JOSEPH.

Enter JULIE DE MORTEMAR.

Rich. That's my sweet Julie!—why, upon this face
Blushes such daybreak, one might swear the morning
Were come to visit Tithon.

Julie [*placing herself at his feet*]. Are you gracious?—
May I say "Father?"
Rich. Now and ever!
Julie. Father!
A sweet word to an orphan.
Rich. No; not orphan
While Richelieu lives; thy father loved me well;
My friend, ere I had flatterers (now, I'm great,
In other phrase, I'm friendless)—he died young
In years, not service, and bequeath'd thee to me;
And thou shalt have a dowry, girl, to buy
Thy mate amidst the mightiest. Drooping?—sighs?
Art thou not happy at the court?
Julie. Not often.
Rich. [*aside*]. Can she love Baradas? Ah! at thy heart
There's what can smile and sigh, blush and grow pale,
All in a breath? Thou art admired—art young;
Does not his majesty commend thy beauty—
Ask thee to sing to him?—and swear such sounds
Had smooth'd the brows of Saul?
Julie. He's very tiresome,
Our worthy king.
Rich. Fie! kings are never tiresome,
Save to their ministers. What courtly gallants
Charm ladies most?—De Sourdiac, Longueville, or
The favourite Baradas?
Julie. A smileless man—
I fear and shun him.
Rich. Yet he courts thee?
Julie. Then
He is more tiresome than his Majesty.
Rich. Right, girl, shun Baradas. Yet of these flowers
Of France, not one, in whose honied breath
Thy heart hears summer whisper?

Enter HUGUET.

Hug. The Chevalier
De Mauprat waits below.
Julie [*starting up*]. De Mauprat!
Rich. Hem!
He has been tiresome too!—Anon. [*Exit* HUGUET.
Julie. What doth he?—
I mean—I—Does your Eminence—that is—
Know you Messire de Mauprat?
Rich. Well!—and you—
Has he address'd you often?
Julie. Often!—No—
Nine times;—nay, ten; the last time, by the lattice
Of the great staircase. [*In a melancholy tone*]. The Court sees him rarely.
Rich. A bold and forward royster!
Julie. *He?* nay, modest,
Gentle, and sad, methinks.
Rich. Wears gold and azure?
Julie. No; sable.
Rich. So you note his colours, Julie?
Shame on you, child; look loftier. By the mass,
I have business with this modest gentleman.
Julie. You're angry with poor Julie. There's no cause.
Rich. No cause—you hate my foes?
Julie. I do!
Rich. Hate Mauprat?
Julie. Not Mauprat. No, not Adrien, father.
Rich. Adrien!
Familiar!—Go, child; no, not *that* way; wait
In the tapestry chamber; I will join you,—go.
Julie. His brows are knit; I dare not call him father!
But I *must* speak—Your Eminence——
Rich. [*sternly*]. Well, girl!
Julie. Nay,

Smile on me—one smile more; there, now I'm happy.
Do not rank Mauprat with your foes; he is not,
I know he *is* not; he loves France too well.
Rich. Not rank De Mauprat with my foes? So be it.
I'll blot him from that list.
Julie. That's my own father.
[*Exit* JULIE.
Rich. [*ringing a small bell on the table*]. Huguet!
Enter HUGUET.
De Mauprat struggled not, nor murmured?
Hug. No; proud and passive.
Rich. Bid him enter.—Hold!
Look that he hide no weapon. Humph, despair
Makes victims sometimes victors. When he has enter'd
Glide round unseen;—place thyself yonder [*pointing to the screen*]; watch him;
If he show violence—(let me see thy carbine;
So, a good weapon;)—if he play the lion,
Why—the dog's death.
Hug. I never miss my mark.
[*Exit* HUGUET; RICHELIEU *seats himself at the table, and slowly arranges the papers before him. Enter* DE MAUPRAT, *preceded by* HUGUET, *who then retires behind the screen.*
Rich. Approach, sir.—Can you call to mind the hour,
Now three years since, when in this room, methinks,
Your presence honour'd me?
De Mau. It is, my Lord,
One of my most——
Rich. [*drily*]. Delightful recollections.
De Mau. [*aside*]. St. Denis! doth he make a jest of axe
And headsman?
Rich. [*sternly*]. I did then accord you
A mercy ill requited—you still live?

De Mau. To meet death face to face at last.
[*Rich.* Your words
Are bold.
De Mau. My deeds have not belied them.
Rich. Deeds!
[O miserable delusion of man's pride!
Deeds! cities sack'd, fields ravaged, hearths profaned,
Men butcher'd! In your hour of doom behold
The *deeds* you boast of! From rank showers of blood,
And the red light of blazing roofs, you build
The rainbow glory, and to shuddering conscience
Cry,—Lo, the bridge to Heaven!
De Mau. If war be sinful,
Your hand the gauntlet cast.
Rich. It was so, sir.
Note the distinction:—I weigh'd well the cause
Which made the standard holy; raised the war
But to secure the peace. France bled—I groan'd;
But look'd beyond; and, in the vista, saw
France saved, and I exulted. You—but you
Were but the tool of slaughter—knowing nought,
Foreseeing nought, nought hoping, nought lamenting,
And for nought fit—save cutting throats for hire.
Deeds, marry, deeds!
De Mau. If you would deign to speak
Thus to your armies ere they march to battle,
Perchance your Eminence might have the pain
Of the throat-cutting to yourself.
Rich. [*aside*]. He has wit,
This Mauprat—[*Aloud.*] Let it pass; there is against you
What you can less excuse.] Messire de Mauprat,
Doom'd to sure death, how hast thou since consumed
The time allotted thee for serious thought
And solemn penitence?
De Mau. [*embarrassed*]. The time, my lord?

Rich. Is not the question plain? I'll answer for thee.
Thou hast sought nor priest nor shrine; no sackcloth chafed
Thy delicate flesh. The rosary and the death's-head
Have not, with pious meditation, purged
Earth from the carnal gaze. What thou hast *not* done
Brief told; what done, a volume! Wild debauch,
Turbulent riot;—for the morn the dice-box—
Noon claim'd the duel—and the night the wassail;
These, your most holy, pure preparatives,
For death and judgment. Do I wrong you, sir?

De Mau. I was not always thus:—if changed my nature,
Blame that which changed my fate.—Alas, my lord,
[There is a brotherhood which calm-eyed reason
Can wot not of betwixt despair and mirth.
My birth-place mid the vines of sunny Provence,
Perchance the stream that sparkles in my veins
Came from that wine of passionate life which, erst,
Glow'd in the wild heart of the troubadour:
And danger, which makes steadier courage wary,
But fevers me with an insane delight;
As one of old who on the mountain crags
Caught madness from a Mænad's haunting eyes.
Were you, my lord,—whose path imperial power,
And the grave cares of reverent wisdom, guard
From all that tempts to folly meaner men,—]
Were you accursed with that which you inflicted—
By bed and board, dogg'd by one ghastly spectre—
The while within you youth beat high, and life
Grew lovelier from the neighbouring frown of death—
The heart no bud, nor fruit—save in those seeds
Most worthless, which spring up, bloom, bear, and wither
In the same hour—Were this your fate, perchance,
You would have err'd like me!

Rich. I might, like you,

Have been a brawler and a reveller;—not,
Like you, a trickster and a thief.—
De Mau. [*advancing threateningly*]. Lord Cardinal!
Unsay those words!—
[HUGUET *deliberately raises the carbine.*
Rich. [*waving his hand*]. Not quite so quick, friend Huguet;
Messire de Mauprat is a patient man,
And he can wait!—
You have outrun your fortune;—
I blame you not, that you would be a beggar—
Each to his taste!—But I do charge you, sir,
That, being beggar'd, you would coin false moneys
Out of that crucible, called DEBT.—To live
On means not yours—be brave in silks and laces,
Gallant in steeds—splendid in banquets;—all
Not *yours*—ungiven—uninherited—unpaid for;—
This is to be a trickster; and to filch
Men's art and labour, which to them is wealth,
Life, daily bread,—quitting all scores with—"Friend,
You're troublesome!"—Why this, forgive me,
Is what—when done with a less dainty grace—
Plain folks call *"Theft!"* You owe eight thousand pistoles,
Minus one crown, two liards!——
De Mau. [*aside*]. The old conjuror!
'Sdeath, he'll inform me next how many cups
I drank at dinner!
Rich. This is scandalous,
Shaming your birth and blood. I tell you, sir,
That you must pay your debts.
De Mau. With all my heart,
My lord. Where shall I borrow, then, the money?
Rich. [*aside and laughing*]. A humorous dare-devil!—
The very man
To suit my purpose—ready, frank, and bold!

[*Rising and earnestly.*

Adrien de Mauprat, men have called me cruel;—
I am not;—I am *just!*—I found France rent asunder,—
The rich men despots, and the poor banditti;—
Sloth in the mart, and schism within the temple;
Brawls festering to rebellion; and weak laws
Rotting away with rust in antique sheaths.
I have re-created France; and, from the ashes
Of the old feudal and decrepit carcase,
Civilization on her luminous wings
Soars, phœnix-like, to Jove! What was my art?
Genius, some say,—some, fortune,—witchcraft, some.
Not so;—my art was JUSTICE!—Force and fraud
Misname it cruelty—you shall confute them!
My champion YOU? You met me as your foe,
Depart my friend—You shall not die.—France needs you.
You shall wipe off all stains,—be rich, be honour'd,
Be great.——

[DE MAUPRAT *falls on his knee*—RICHELIEU *raises him.*

I ask, sir, in return, this hand,
To gift it with a bride, whose dower shall match,
Yet not exceed, her beauty.

De Mau. I, my lord,—[*hesitating*]
I have no wish to marry.

Rich. Surely, sir,
To die were worse.

De Mau. Scarcely; the poorest coward
Must die,—but knowingly to march to marriage—
My lord, it asks the courage of a lion!

Rich. Traitor, thou triflest with me! I know *all!*
Thou hast dared to love my ward—my charge.

De Mau. As rivers
May love the sunlight—basking in the beams,
And hurrying on!—

Rich. Thou hast told her of thy love?
De Mau. My lord, if I had dared to love a maid,
Lowliest in France, I would not so have wronged her,
As bid her link rich life and virgin hope
With one, the deathman's gripe might, from her side,
Pluck at the nuptial altar.
Rich. I believe thee;
Yet since she knows not of thy love, renounce her;
Take life and fortune with another!—Silent?
De Mau. Your fate has been one triumph—you know not
How bless'd a thing it was in my dark hour
To nurse the one sweet thought you bid me banish.
Love hath no need of words;—nor less within
That holiest temple—the Heaven-builded soul—
Breathes the recorded vow. Base knight,—false lover
Were he, who barter'd all, that brighten'd grief,
Or sanctified despair, for life and gold.
Revoke your mercy;—I prefer the fate
I look'd for!
Rich. Huguet! to the tapestry chamber
Conduct your prisoner. [*To* MAUPRAT.]
You will there behold
The executioner:—your doom be private—
And Heaven have mercy on you!
De Mau. When I am dead,
Tell her, I loved her.
Rich. Keep such follies, sir,
For fitter ears;—go—
De Mau. Does he mock me?
[*Exeunt* DE MAUPRAT, HUGUET.
Rich. Joseph,
Come forth.

Enter JOSEPH.

Methinks your cheek hath lost its rubies;

I fear you have been too lavish of the flesh;
The scourge is heavy.
Joseph. Pray you, change the subject.
Rich. You good men are so modest!—Well, to business!
Go instantly—deeds—notaries!—bid my stewards
Arrange my house by the Luxembourg—*my* house
No more!—a bridal present to my ward,
Who weds to-morrow.
Joseph. Weds, with whom?
Rich. De Mauprat.
Joseph. Penniless husband!
Rich. Bah! the mate for beauty
Should be a man, and not a money-chest!
When her brave sire lay on his bed of death,
I vow'd to be a father to his Julie:—
And so he died—the smile upon his lips!—
And when I spared the life of her young lover,
Methought I saw that smile again!—Who else,
Look you, in all the court—who else so well,
Brave, or supplant the favourite;—balk the king—
Baffle their schemes?—I have tried him:—He has honour
And courage;—qualities that eagle-plume
Men's souls,—and fit them for the fiercest sun,
Which ever melted the weak waxen minds
That flutter in the beams of gaudy Power!
Besides, he has taste, this Mauprat:—When my play
Was acted to dull tiers of lifeless gapers,
Who had no soul for poetry, I saw him
Applaud in the proper places:—trust me, Joseph,
He is a man of an uncommon promise!
Joseph. And yet your foe.
Rich. Have I not foes enow?—
Great men gain doubly when they make foes friends.
Remember my grand maxims:—First employ

All methods to conciliate.

Joseph. Failing these?

Rich. [*fiercely*]. All means to crush: as with the opening, and
The clenching of this little hand, I will
Crush the small venom of these stinging courtiers.
So, so, we've baffled Baradas.

Joseph. And when
Check the conspiracy?

Rich. Check, check? Full way to it.
Let it bud, ripen, flaunt i' the day, and burst
To fruit,—the Dead Sea's fruit of ashes; ashes
Which I will scatter to the winds.
Go, Joseph;
When you return, I have a feast for you;
The last great act of my great play: the verses,
Methinks, are fine,—ah, very fine.—*You* write
Verses!—[*aside*] *such* verses!—You have wit, discernment.

Joseph [*aside*]. Worse than the scourge! Strange that so great a statesman
Should be so bad a poet.

Rich. What dost thou say?

Joseph. That it is strange so great a statesman should
Be so sublime a poet.

Rich. Ah, you rogue;
Laws die, Books never. Of my ministry
I am not vain! but of my muse I own it.
Come, you shall hear the verses now. [*Takes up a MS.*

Joseph. My lord,
The deeds, the notaries!

Rich. True, I pity you;
But business first, then pleasure. [*Exit* JOSEPH.

Rich. [*seats himself and reading*]. Ah, sublime!

Enter DE MAUPRAT *and* JULIE.

De Mau. Oh, speak, my lord—I dare not think you mock me.
And yet—
Rich. Hush—hush—This line must be consider'd!
Julie. Are we not both your children?
Rich. What a couplet!——
How now! Oh, sir—you live!
De Mau. Why, no, methinks,
Elysium is not life!
Julie. He smiles!—you smile,
My father! From my heart for ever, now,
I'll blot the name of orphan!
Rich. Rise, my children,
For ye are mine—mine both;—and in your sweet
And young delight—your love (life's first-born glory)—
My own lost youth breathes musical!
De Mau. I'll seek
Temple and priest henceforward, were it but
To learn Heaven's choicest blessings.
Rich. Thou shalt seek
Temple and priest right soon; the morrow's sun
Shall see across these barren thresholds pass
The fairest bride in Paris.—Go, my children,
Even *I* loved once!—Be lovers while ye may!
How is it with you, sir! You bear it bravely:
You know, it asks the courage of a lion.

[*Exeunt* JULIE *and* DE MAUPRAT.

Rich. Oh godlike Power! Woe, Rapture, Penury, Wealth,—
Marriage and Death, for one infirm old man
Through a great empire to dispense—withhold—
As the will whispers! And shall things—like motes
That live in my daylight—lackeys of court wages,
Dwarf'd starvelings—manikins, upon whose shoulders

The burthen of a province were a load
More heavy than the globe on Atlas,—cast
Lots for my robes and sceptre? France! I love thee!
All Earth shall never pluck thee from my heart!
My mistress France—my wedded wife,—sweet France,
Who shall proclaim divorce for thee and me!

[*Exit* RICHELIEU.

ACT II.

SECOND DAY.

SCENE I.—*A splendid apartment in* MAUPRAT'S *new House. Casements opening to the Gardens, beyond which the domes of the Luxembourg Palace.*

Enter BARADAS.

Bar. Mauprat's new home:—too splendid for a soldier!
But o'er his floors—the while I stalk—methinks
My shadow spreads gigantic to the gloom
The old rude towers of the Bastille cast far
Along the smoothness of the jocund day.—
Well, thou hast 'scaped the fierce caprice of Richelieu;
But art thou farther from the headsman, fool?
Thy secret I have whisper'd to the king;
Thy marriage makes the king thy foe.—Thou stand'st
On the abyss—and in the pool below
I see a ghastly, headless phantom mirror'd;—
Thy likeness ere the marriage moon hath waned.
Meanwhile—meanwhile—ha—ha, if thou art wedded,
Thou art not wived.

Enter MAUPRAT [*splendidly dressed*].

De Mau. Was ever fate like mine?
So blest and yet so wretched!

Bar. Joy, De Mauprat!—
Why, what a brow, man, for your wedding-day!

De Mau. Jest not!—Distraction!

Bar. What, your wife a shrew
Already? Courage, man—the common lot!

De Mau. Oh! that she were less lovely, or less loved!

Bar. Riddles again!

De Mau. You know what chanced between
The cardinal and myself.

Bar. This morning brought
Your letter:—faith, a strange account! I laugh'd
And wept at once for gladness.

De Mau. We were wed
At noon;—the rite perform'd, came hither!—scarce
Arrived, when——

Bar. Well?—

De Mau. Wide flew the doors, and lo,
Messire de Beringhen, and this epistle!

Bar. 'Tis the king's hand!—the royal seal!

De Mau. Read—read—

Bar. [*reading*]. "Whereas Adrien de Mauprat, Colonel and Chevalier in our armies, being already guilty of High Treason, by the seizure of our town of Faviaux, has presumed, without our knowledge, consent, or sanction, to connect himself by marriage with Julie de Mortemar, a wealthy orphan, attached to the person of Her Majesty, without our knowledge or consent—We do hereby proclaim and declare the said marriage contrary to law. On penalty of death, Adrien de Mauprat will not communicate with the said Julie de Mortemar by word or letter, save in the presence of our faithful servant, the Sieur de Beringhen, and then with such respect and decorum as are due to a demoiselle attached to the Court of France, until such time as it may suit our royal pleasure to confer with the Holy Church on the formal annulment of the marriage, and with our Council on the punishment to be awarded to Messire de Mauprat, who is cautioned, for his own sake, to preserve silence as to our injunction, more especially to Mademoiselle de Mortemar.

"Given under our hand and seal at the Louvre.

"Louis."

Bar. [*returning the letter*]. Amazement!—Did not
Richelieu say, the king
Knew not your crime?
De Mau. He said so.
Bar. Poor De Mauprat!—
See you the snare, the vengeance worse than death,
Of which you are the victim?
De Mau. Ha!
Bar. [*aside.*] It works!
[JULIE *and* DE BERINGHEN *in the Gardens.*
You have not sought the cardinal yet to——
De Mau. No!
Scarce yet my sense awaken'd from the shock;
Now I will seek him.
Bar. Hold, beware!—Stir not
Till we confer again.
De Mau. Speak—out, man!
Bar. Hush!
Your wife—De Beringhen!—Be on your guard—
Obey the royal orders to the letter.
I'll look around your palace. By my troth
A princely mansion!
De Mau. Stay—
Bar. So new a bridegroom
Can want no visitors;—Your servant, madam!
Oh! happy pair—Oh! charming picture!
[*Exit through a side-door.*
Julie. Adrien,
You left us suddenly—Are you not well?
De Mau. Oh, very well—that is—extremely ill!
Julie. Ill, Adrien? [*Taking his hand.*
De Mau. Not when I see thee.
[*He is about to lift her hand to his lips when* DE BERINGHEN *coughs and pulls his mantle.* MAUPRAT *drops the hand and walks away.*

Julie. Alas!
Should he not love me?
De Ber. [*aside.*] Have a care; I must
Report each word—each gesture to his Majesty.
De Mau. Sir, if you were not in his Majesty's service,
You'd be the most officious, impudent,
Damn'd busy-body ever interfering
In a man's family affairs.
De Ber. But as
I do belong, sir, to his Majesty—
De Mau. You're lucky!—Still, were we a story higher,
'Twere prudent not to go too near the window.
Julie. Adrien, what have I done? Say, am I changed
Since yesterday?—or was it but for wealth,
Ambition, life—that—that—you swore you loved me?
De Mau. I shall go mad!—I do, indeed I do—
De Ber. [*aside.*] Not love her! that were highly disrespectful.
Julie. You do—what, Adrien?
De Mau. Oh! I do, indeed——
I do think, that this weather is delightful!
A charming day! the sky is so serene!
And what a prospect!—[*to* De Beringhen] Oh! you popinjay!
Julie. He jests at me!—he mocks me!—yet I love him,
And every look becomes the lips we love!
Perhaps I am too grave?—You laugh at Julie;
If laughter please you, welcome be the music!
Only say, Adrien, that you love me.
De Mau. [*kissing her hand.*] Ay;
With my whole heart I love you!——
Now, sir, go,

And tell that to his Majesty!—Who ever
Heard of its being a state offence to kiss
The hand of one's own wife?
Julie. He says he loves me,
And starts away, as if to say "I love you"
Meant something *very* dreadful.—Come, sit by me,—
I place your chair!—fie on your gallantry!
[*They sit down; as he pushes his chair back, she draws hers nearer.*
Why must this strange Messire de Beringhen
Be always here? He never takes a hint.
Do you not wish him gone?
De Mau. Upon my soul
I do, my Julie!—Send him for your *bouquet,*
Your glove, your—anything.
Julie. Messire de Beringhen,
I dropp'd my glove in the gardens by the fountain,
Or the alcove, or—stay—no, by the statue
Of Cupid; may I ask you to——
De Ber. To send for it?
Certainly [*ringing a bell on the table.*] André, Pierre, (your rascals, how
Do ye call them?)

Enter Servants.

Ah—*Madame* has dropp'd her glove
In the gardens, by the fountain,—or the alcove;
Or—stay—no, by the statue—eh?—of Cupid.
Bring it.
De Mau. Did ever now one pair of shoulders
Carry such waggon-loads of impudence
Into a gentleman's drawing-room?
Dear Julie,
I'm busy—letters—visitors—the devil!
I do beseech you leave me—I say—leave me.
Julie [*weeping.*] You are unkind. [*Exit.*

[*As she goes out,* MAUPRAT *drops on one knee and kisses the hem of her mantle, unseen by her.*

De Ber. Ten millions of apologies——

De Mau. I'll not take one of them. I have, as yet,
Withstood all things—my heart—my love—my rights.
But Julie's tears!——When is this farce to end?

De Ber. Oh! when you please. His Majesty requests me,
As soon as you infringe his gracious orders,
To introduce you to the Governor
Of the Bastille. I should have had that honour
Before, but, gad, my foible is good-nature;
One can't be hard upon a friend's infirmities.

De Mau. I know the king can send me to the scaffold—
Dark prospect!—but I'm used to it; and if
The Church and Council, by this hour to-morrow,
One way or other settle not the matter,
I will——

De Ber. What, my dear sir?

De Mau. Show you the door
My dear, dear sir; talk as I please, with whom
I please, in my own house, dear sir, until
His Majesty shall condescend to find
A stouter gentleman than you, dear sir,
To take me out; and now you understand me,
My dear, most dear—oh damnably dear sir!

De Ber. What, almost in a passion! you will cool
Upon reflection. Well, since *Madame's* absent,
I'll take a small refreshment. Now, don't stir;
Be careful;—how's your burgundy?—I'll taste it—
Finish it all before I leave you. Nay,
No form;—you see I make myself at home.

[*Exit* DE BERINGHEN.

De Mau. [*going to the door through which* BARADAS *had passed.*] Baradas! Count!

Enter BARADAS.

You spoke of snares—of vengeance
Sharper than death—be plainer.

Bar. What so clear?
Richelieu has but two passions—

De Mau. Richelieu!

Bar. Yes!
Ambition and revenge—in you both blended.
First for ambition—Julie is his ward,
Innocent—docile—pliant to his will—
He placed her at the court—foresaw the rest—
The king loves Julie!

De Mau. Merciful Heaven! The king!

Bar. Such Cupids lend new plumes to Richelieu's wings:
But the court etiquette must give such Cupids
The veil of Hymen—(Hymen but in name.)
He look'd abroad—found you his foe:—*thus* served
Ambition—by the grandeur of his ward,
And vengeance—by dishonour to his foe!

De Mau. Prove this.

Bar. You have the proof—the royal Letter:—
Your strange exemption from the general pardon,
Known but to me and Richelieu; can you doubt
Your friend to acquit your foe? The truth is glaring—
Richelieu alone could tell the princely lover
The tale which sells your life,—or buys your honour!

De Mau. I see it all! Mock pardon—hurried nuptials—
False bounty!—all!—the serpent of that smile!
Oh! it stings home!

Bar. You yet shall crush his malice;
Our plans are sure:—Orleans is at our head;
We meet to-night; join us, and with us triumph.

De Mau. To-night?—Oh, Heaven!—my marriage night!—Revenge!

Bar. [What class of men, whose white lips do not curse
The grim, insatiate, universal tyrant?
We, noble-born—where are our antique rights—
Our feudal seigniories—our castled strength,
That did divide us from the base Plebeians,
And made our swords our law—where are they? Trod
To dust—and o'er the graves of our dead power
Scaffolds are monuments—the kingly house
Shorn of its beams—the Royal Sun of France
'Clipsed by this blood-red comet. Where we turn,
Nothing but Richelieu!—armies—church—state—laws,
But mirrors that do multiply his beams.
He sees all—acts all—Argus and Briaræus—
Spy at our boards—and deathsman at our hearths;
Under the venom of one laidley nightshade,
Wither the lilies of all France.

De Mau. [*impatiently*]. But Julie—

Bar. [*unheeding him*]. As yet the Fiend that serves hath saved his power
From every snare; and in the epitaphs
Of many victims dwells a warning moral
That preaches caution. Were I not assured
That what before was hope is ripen'd now
Into most certain safety, trust me, Mauprat,
I still could hush my hate and mark thy wrongs,
And say "Be patient!" *Now,* the King himself
Smiles kindly when I tell him that his peers
Will rid him of his Priest. You knit your brows,
Noble impatience!—Pass we to our scheme!]
'Tis Richelieu's wont, each morn, within his chapel
(Hypocrite worship ended), to dispense
Alms to the Mendicant-friars,—in that guise
A band (yourself the leader) shall surround

And seize the despot.

De Mau. But the king?—but Julie?

Bar. The king, infirm in health, in mind more feeble,
Is but the plaything of a minister's will.
Were Richelieu dead—his power were mine; and Louis
Soon should forget his passion and your crime.
But whither now?

De Mau. I know not; I scarce hear thee;
A little while for thought: anon I'll join thee;
But now, all air seems tainted, and I loathe
The face of man!

[*Exit* De Mauprat *through the Gardens.*

Bar. Start from the chase, my prey,
But as thou speed'st the hell-hounds of revenge
Pant in thy track and dog thee down.

Enter De Beringhen, *his mouth full, a napkin in his hand.*

De Ber. Chevalier,
Your cook's a miracle,—what, my host gone?
Faith, count, my office is a post of danger—
A fiery fellow, Mauprat! touch and go,—
Match and saltpetre,—pr—r—r—r—!

Bar. You
Will be released ere long. The king resolves
To call the bride to court this day.

De Ber. Poor Mauprat!
Yet, since *you* love the lady, why so careless
Of the king's suit?

Bar. Because the lady's virtuous,
And the king timid. Ere he win the suit,
He'll lose the crown,—the bride will be a widow,—
And I—the Richelieu of the Regent Orleans.

De Ber. Is Louis still so chafed against the Fox
For snatching yon fair dainty from the Lion?

Bar. So chafed, that Richelieu totters. Yes, the king

Is half conspirator against the cardinal.
Enough of this. I've found the man we wanted,—
The man to head the hands that murder Richelieu,—
The man, whose name the synonym for daring.
De Ber. He must mean me! No, count; I am, I own,
A valiant dog—but still——
Bar. Whom can I mean
But Mauprat?—Mark, to-night we meet at Marion's.
There shall we sign; thence send this scroll [*showing it*] to Bouillon.
You're in that secret [*affectionately*]—one of our new Council.
De Ber. But to admit the Spaniard—France's foe—
Into the heart of France—dethrone the king—
It looks like treason, and I smell the headsman.
Bar. Oh, sir, too late to falter: when we meet
We must arrange the separate, coarser scheme,
For Richelieu's death. Of this despatch De Mauprat
Must nothing learn. He only bites at vengeance,
And he would start from treason.—We must post him
Without the door at Marion's—as a sentry.
[*Aside.*]—So, when his head is on the block—his tongue
Cannot betray our more august designs!
De Ber. I'll meet you if the king can spare me.—[*Aside.*] No!
I am too old a goose to play with foxes,
I'll roost at home. Meanwhile, in the next room
There's a delicious pâté,—let's discuss it.
Bar. Pshaw! a man fill'd with a sublime ambition
Has no time to discuss your pâtés.
De Ber. Pshaw!
And a man fill'd with as sublime a pâté
Has no time to discuss ambition.—Gad,
I have the best of it!

Enter JULIE *hastily with first* Courtier.

Julie [*to* Courtier]. A summons, sir,
To attend the Louvre?—On *this* day, too?
Cour. Madame,
The royal carriage waits below.—Messire [*to* De Beringhen]
You will return with us.
Julie. What can this mean?—
Where is my husband?
Bar. He has left the house,
Perhaps till nightfall—so he bade me tell you.
Alas, were I the lord of such fair treasure—
Julie [*impatiently*]. Till nightfall?—Strange—my heart misgives me!
Cour. Madam,
My orders will not brook delay.
Julie [*to* Baradas]. You'll see him—
And you will tell him!
Bar. From the flowers of Hybla
Never more gladly did the bee bear honey,
Than I take sweetness from those rosiest lips,
Though to the hive of others!
Cour. [*to* De Beringhen]. Come, Messire.
De Ber. [*hesitating*]. One moment, just to—
Cour. Come, sir.
De Ber. I shall not
Discuss the pâté after all. 'Ecod,
I'm puzzled now. I don't know who's the best of it!
[*Exeunt* Julie, De Beringhen, *and* Courtier.
Bar. Now will this fire his fever into madness!
All is made clear: Mauprat *must* murder Richelieu—
Die for that crime:—I shall console his Julie—
This will reach Bouillon!—from the wrecks of France
I shall carve out—who knows—perchance a throne!
All in despite of my Lord Cardinal.—

Enter DE MAUPRAT *from the Gardens.*

De Mau. Speak! can it be?—Methought, that from the terrace
I saw the carriage of the king—and Julie!
No!—no!—my frenzy peoples the void air
With its own phantoms!
Bar. Nay, too true.—Alas!
Was ever lightning swifter, or more blasting,
Than Richelieu's forkèd guile?
De Mau. I'll to the Louvre——
Bar. And lose all hope!—The Louvre!—the sure gate
To the Bastille!
De Mau. The king——
Bar. Is but the wax,
Which Richelieu stamps! Break the malignant *seal,*
And I will rase the print. Come, man, take heart!
Her virtue well could brave a sterner trial
Than a few hours of cold imperious courtship.
Were Richelieu *dust*—no danger!
De Mau. Ghastly Vengeance!
To thee, and thine august and solemn sister,
The unrelenting Death, I dedicate
The blood of Armand Richelieu! When Dishonour
Reaches our hearths Law dies and Murther takes
The angel shape of Justice!
Bar. Bravely said!
At midnight,—Marion's!—Nay, I cannot leave thee
To thoughts that——
De Mau. Speak not to me!—I am yours!—
But speak not! There's a voice within my soul,
Whose cry could drown the thunder.—Oh! if men
Will play dark sorcery with the heart of man,
Let them, who raise the spell, beware the Fiend! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

A room in the Palais Cardinal (as in the First Act).

RICHELIEU *and* JOSEPH.

FRANCOIS *writing at a table.*

Joseph. Yes;—Huguet, taking his accustom'd round,—
Disguised as some plain burgher,—heard these rufflers
Quoting our name:—he listen'd,—"Pshaw," said one,
"We are to seize the Cardinal in his palace
To-morrow!"—"How?" the other ask'd:—"You'll hear
The whole design to-night: the Duke of Orleans
And Baradas have got the map of action
At their fingers' end."—"So be it," quoth the other,
"I will be there,—Marion de Lorme's—at midnight!"

Rich. I have them, man,—I have them!

Joseph. So they say
Of you, my lord;—believe me, that their plans
Are mightier than you deem. You must employ
Means no less vast to meet them!

Rich. Bah! in policy
We foil gigantic danger, not by giants,
But dwarfs.—The statues of our stately fortune
Are sculptured by the chisel—not the axe!
Ah! were I younger—by the knightly heart
That beats beneath these priestly robes, I would
Have pastime with these cut-throats!—Yea,—as when
Lured to the ambush of the expecting foe,—
I clove my pathway through the plumed sea!
Reach me yon falchion, François,—not that bauble
For carpet-warriors,—yonder—such a blade
As old Charles Martel might have wielded when
He drove the Saracen from France.

[FRANÇOIS *brings him one of the long two-handed swords worn in the middle ages.*

With this
I, at Rochelle, did hand to hand engage
The stalwart Englisher,—no mongrels, boy,
Those island mastiffs,—mark the notch—a deep one—
His casque made here,—I shore him to the waist!
A toy—a feather—then! [*Tries to wield, and lets it fall.*
You see, a child could
Slay Richelieu now.

Fran. [*his hand on his hilt*]. But *now,* at your command
Are other weapons, my good lord.

Rich. [*who has seated himself as to write, lifts the pen.*
True,—THIS!
Beneath the rule of men entirely great
The pen is mightier than the sword. Behold
The arch-enchanter's wand!—itself a nothing!—
But taking sorcery from the master-hand
To paralyse the Cæsars—and to strike
The loud earth breathless!—Take away the sword—
States can be saved without it! [*Looking on the clock.*
'Tis the hour,—
Retire, sir. [*Exit* FRANÇOIS.

[*A knock is heard. A door concealed in the arras opens cautiously. Enter* MARION DE LORME.

Joseph [*amazed*]. Marion de Lorme!

Rich. Hist! Joseph!
Keep guard.

[JOSEPH *retires to the principal entrance.*
My faithful Marion!

Marion. Good, my Lord,
They meet to-night in my poor house. The Duke
Of Orleans heads them.

Rich. Yes, go on.

Marion. His Highness

Much question'd if I knew some brave, discreet,
And vigilant man, whose tongue could keep a secret,
And who had those twin qualities for service,
The love of gold, the hate of Richelieu.—
Rich. You?—
Marion. Made answer, "Yes—my brother;—bold and trusty;
Whose faith, my faith could pledge;"—the Duke then bade me
Have him equipp'd and arm'd—well mounted—ready
This night to part for Italy.
Rich. Aha!—
Has Bouillon too turn'd traitor?—So, methought!—
What part of Italy?
Marion. The Piedmont frontier,
Where Bouillon lies encamp'd.
Rich. Now there is danger!
Great danger!—if he tamper with the Spaniard,
And Louis list not to my counsel, as,
Without sure proof, he will not,—France is lost.
What more?
Marion. Dark hints of some design to seize
Your person in your palace. Nothing clear—
His Highness trembled while he spoke—the words
Did choke each other.
Rich. So!—Who is the brother
You recommended to the Duke?
Marion. Whoever
Your Eminence may father!—
Rich. Darling Marion!
[*Goes to the table, and returns with a large bag of gold.*
There—pshaw—a trifle!—What an eye you have!
And what a smile—child!—[*kisses her.*]—Ah! you fair perdition—

'Tis well I'm old!

Marion [*aside and seriously*]. What a great man he is!

Rich. You are sure they meet?—the hour?

Marion. At midnight.

Rich. And

You will engage to give the Duke's despatch
To whom I send?

Marion. Ay, marry!

Rich. [*aside.*] Huguet? No;
He will be wanted elsewhere.—Joseph?—zealous,
But too well known—too much the *elder* brother!
Mauprat?—alas! it is his wedding-day!—
François?—the Man of Men!—unnoted—young—
Ambitious—[*Goes to the door.*]—François!

Enter FRANCOIS.

Rich. Follow this fair lady;
(Find him the suiting garments, Marion,) take
My fleetest steed:—arm thyself to the teeth;
A packet will be given you—with orders,
No matter what!—The instant that your hand
Closes upon it—clutch *it,* like your honour,
Which Death alone can steal, or ravish—set
Spurs to your steed—be breathless, till you stand
Again before me.—Stay, sir!—You will find me
Two short leagues hence—at Ruelle, in my castle.
Young man, be blithe!—for—note me—from the hour
I grasp that packet—think your guardian Star
Rains fortune on you!—

Fran. If I fail—

Rich. Fail—fail!
In the lexicon of youth, which Fate reserves
For a bright manhood, there is no such word
As—*fail!*—(You will instruct him further, Marion)
Follow her—but at distance;—speak not to her,
Till you are housed.—Farewell, boy! Never say

"*Fail*" again.

Fran. I will not!

Rich. [*patting his locks*]. There's my young hero!—

[*Exeunt* FRANCOIS, MARION.

Rich. So, they would seize my person in this palace?—
I cannot guess their scheme;—but my retinue
Is here too large!—a single traitor could
Strike impotent the faith of thousands;—Joseph,
Art sure of Huguet?—Think—we hang'd his Father!

Joseph. But you have bought the Son;—heap'd favours on him!

Rich. Trash!—favours past—that's nothing.—In his hours
Of confidence with you, has he named the favours
To *come*—he counts on?

Joseph. Yes:—a Colonel's rank,
And Letters of Nobility.

Rich. What, Huguet!—

[*Here* HUGUET *enters, as to address the* CARDINAL, *who does not perceive him.*

Hug. My own name, soft—[*glides behind the screen*].

Rich. Colonel and Nobleman!
My bashful Huguet—that can never be!—
We have him not the less—we'll *promise it!*
And see the King withholds!—Ah, kings are oft
A great convenience to a minister!
No wrong to Huguet either;—Moralists
Say, Hope is sweeter than Possession!—Yes!—
We'll count on Huguet! Favours *past* do gorge
Our dogs! leave service drowsy—dull the scent,
Slacken the speed;—favours *to come,* my Joseph,
Produce a lusty, hungry gratitude,
A ravenous zeal, that of the commonest cur
Would make a Cerberus.—You are right, this treason
Assumes a fearful aspect:—but once crush'd,

Its very ashes shall manure the soil
Of power; and ripen such full sheaves of greatness,
That all the summer of my fate shall seem
Fruitless beside the autumn!

[HUGUET *holds up his hand menacingly, and creeps out.*

Joseph. The saints grant it!

Rich. [*solemnly*]. Yes—for sweet France, Heaven grant it!—O my country,
For thee—thee only—though men deem it not—
Are toil and terror my familiars!—I
Have made thee great and fair—upon thy brows
Wreath'd the old Roman laurel:—at thy feet
Bow'd nations down.—No pulse in my ambition
Whose beatings were not measured from thy heart!
[In the old times before us, patriots lived
And died for liberty—

Joseph. As you would live
And die for despotry—

Rich. False monk, not so,
But for the purple and the power wherein
State clothes herself.—I love my native land
Not as Venetian, Englisher, or Swiss,
But as a Noble and a Priest of France;
"All things for France"—lo, my eternal maxim!
The vital axle of the restless wheels
That bear me on! With her I have entwined
My passions and my fate—my crimes—my virtues—
Hated and loved, and schemed, and shed men's blood,
As the calm crafts of Tuscan Sages teach
Those who would make their country great. Beyond
The map of France—my heart can travel not,
But fills that limit to its farthest verge;
And while I live—Richelieu and France are one.]
We Priests, to whom the Church forbids in youth

The plighted one—to manhood's toil denies
The soother helpmate—from our wither'd age
Shuts the sweet blossoms of the second spring
That smiles in the name of Father—we are yet
Not holier than Humanity, and must
Fulfil Humanity's condition—Love!
Debarred the Actual, we but breathe a life
To the chill Marble of the Ideal—Thus,
In thy unseen and abstract Majesty,
My France, my Country, I have bodied forth
A thing to love. What are these robes of state,
This pomp, this palace? perishable baubles!
In this world two things only are immortal—
Fame and a People!

Enter HUGUET

Hug. My Lord Cardinal,
Your Eminence bade me seek you at this hour.
Rich. Did I?—True, Huguet—So—you overheard
Strange talk amongst these gallants? Snares and traps
For Richelieu?—Well!—we'll balk them; let me think—
The men-at-arms you head—how many?
Hug. Twenty,
My Lord.
Rich. All trusty?
Hug. Yes, for ordinary
Occasions—if for great ones, I would change
Three-fourths at least.
Rich. Ay, what are great occasions?
Hug. Great bribes!
Rich. [*to* JOSEPH]. Good lack, he knows some paragons
Superior to great bribes!
Hug. True Gentlemen
Who have transgress'd the laws—and value life
And lack not gold; your Eminence alone
Can grant them pardon. *Ergo,* you can trust them!

Rich. Logic!—So be it—let this *honest* twenty
Be arm'd and mounted.—[*Aside.*] So they meet at midnight,
The attempt on me to-morrow—Ho! we'll strike
'Twixt wind and water.—[*Aloud.*] Does it need much time
To find these ornaments to Human Nature?
Hug. My Lord—the trustiest of them are not birds
That love the daylight.—I do know a haunt
Where they meet nightly—
Rich. Ere the dawn be grey,
All could be arm'd, assembled, and at Ruelle
In my old hall?
Hug. By one hour after midnight.
Rich. The castle's strong. You know its outlets, Huguet?
Would twenty men, well posted, keep such guard
That not one step—(and Murther's step is stealthy)—
Could glide within—unseen?
Hug. A triple wall—
A drawbridge and portcullis—twenty men
Under my lead, a month might hold that castle
Against a host.
Rich. They do not strike till morning,
Yet I will shift the quarter—Bid the grooms
Prepare the litter—I will hence to Ruelle
While daylight last—and one hour after midnight
You and your twenty saints shall seek me thither!
You're made to rise!—You are, sir;—eyes of lynx,
Ears of the stag, a footfall like the snow;
You are a valiant fellow;—yea, a trusty,
Religious, exemplary, incorrupt,
And precious jewel of a fellow, Huguet!
If I live long enough,—ay, mark my words—
If I live long enough, you'll be a Colonel—

Noble, perhaps!—One hour, sir, after midnight.

Hug. You leave me dumb with gratitude, my Lord;
I'll pick the trustiest—[*aside.*] Marion's house can furnish!
[*Exit* HUGUET.

Rich. How like a spider shall I sit in my hole,
And watch the meshes tremble.

Joseph. But, my Lord,
Were it not wiser still to man the palace,
And seize the traitors in the act?

Rich. No; Louis,
Long chafed against me—Julie stolen from him,
Will rouse him more. He'll say I hatch'd the treason,
Or scout my charge:—He half desires my death;
But the Despatch to Bouillon, some dark scheme
Against *his* crown—*there* is our weapon, Joseph;
With that, all safe—without it, all his peril!
Meanwhile to my old castle; *you* to court,
Diving with careless eyes into men's hearts,
As ghostly churchmen should do! See the King,
Bid him peruse that sage and holy treatise,
Wherein 'tis set forth how a Premier should
Be chosen from the Priesthood—how the King
Should never listen to a single charge
Against his servant, nor conceal one whisper
That the rank envies of a court distil
Into his ear—to fester the fair name
Of my—I mean his Minister!—Oh! Joseph,
A most convincing treatise.
Good—all favours,
If François be but bold, and Huguet honest.
Huguet—I half suspect—he bow'd too low—
'Tis not his way.

Joseph. This is the curse, my Lord,
Of your high state;—suspicion of all men.

Rich. [*sadly*]. True;—true;—my leeches bribed to
poisoners;—pages
To strangle me in sleep.—My very King
(This brain the unresting loom, from which was woven
The purple of his greatness) leagued against me.
Old—childless—friendless—broken—all forsake—
All—all—but—
Joseph. What?
Rich. The indomitable heart
Of Armand Richelieu!
Joseph. Nought beside?
Rich. Why, Julie,
My own dear foster-child, forgive me;—yes;
This morning, shining through their happy tears,
Thy soft eyes bless'd me!—and thy Lord,—in danger,
He would forsake me not.
Joseph. And Joseph——
Rich. [*after a pause.*] You—
Yes, I believe you—yes—for all men fear you
And the world loves you not. And I, friend Joseph,
I am the only man who could, my Joseph,
Make you a Bishop. Come, we'll go to dinner,
And talk the while of methods to advance
Our Mother Church. Ah, Joseph,—*Bishop Joseph!*

ACT III.

SECOND DAY (MIDNIGHT).

SCENE I.—RICHELIEU'S *Castle at Ruelle. A Gothic Chamber. Moonlight at the window, occasionally obscured.*

Rich. [*reading*]. "In silence, and at night, the Conscience feels
That life should soar to nobler ends than Power."
So sayest thou, sage and sober moralist!
But wert thou tried? Sublime Philosophy,
Thou art the Patriarch's ladder, reaching heaven,
And bright with beck'ning angels—but, alas!
We see thee, like the Patriarch, but in dreams,
By the first step—dull-slumbering on the earth.
I am not happy!—with the Titan's lust
I woo'd a goddess, and I clasp a cloud.
When I am dust, my name shall, like a star,
Shine through wan space, a glory—and a prophet
Whereby pale seers shall from their aëry towers
Con all the ominous signs, benign or evil,
That make the potent astrologue of kings.
But shall the Future judge me by the ends
That I have wrought—or by the dubious means
Through which the stream of my renown hath run
Into the many-voiced unfathom'd Time?
Foul in its bed lie weeds—and heaps of slime,
And with its waves—when sparkling in the sun,
Ofttimes the secret rivulets that swell

Its might of waters—blend the hues of blood.
Yet are my sins not those of CIRCUMSTANCE,
That all-pervading atmosphere, wherein
Our spirits, like the unsteady lizard, take
The tints that colour, and the food that nurtures?
O! ye, whose hour-glass shifts its tranquil sands
In the unvex'd silence of a student's cell;
Ye, whose untempted hearts have never toss'd
Upon the dark and stormy tides where life
Gives battle to the elements,—and man
Wrestles with man for some slight plank, whose weight
Will bear but one—while round the desperate wretch
The hungry billows roar—and the fierce Fate,
Like some huge monster, dim-seen through the surf,
Waits him who drops;—ye safe and formal men,
Who write the deeds, and with unfeverish hand
Weigh in nice scales the motives of the Great,
Ye cannot know what ye have never tried!
History preserves only the fleshless bones
Of what we are—and by the mocking skull
The would-be wise pretend to guess the features!
Without the roundness and the glow of life
How hideous is the skeleton! Without
The colourings and humanities that clothe
Our errors, the anatomists of schools
Can make our memory hideous!
I have wrought
Great uses out of evil tools—and they
In the time to come may bask beneath the light
Which I have stolen from the angry gods,
And warn their sons against the glorious theft,
Forgetful of the darkness which it broke.
I have shed blood—but I have had no foes
Save those the State had—if my wrath was deadly,
'Tis that I felt my country in my veins,

And smote her sons as Brutus smote his own.
And yet I am not happy—blanch'd and sear'd
Before my time—breathing an air of hate,
And seeing daggers in the eyes of men,
And wasting powers that shake the thrones of earth
In contest with the insects—bearding kings
And braved by lackies—murder at my bed;
And lone amidst the multitudinous web,
With the dread Three—that are the Fates who hold
The woof and shears—the Monk, the Spy, the Headsman.
And this is power? Alas! I am not happy.
[*After a pause.*
And yet the Nile is fretted by the weeds
Its rising roots not up; but never yet
Did one least barrier by a ripple vex
My onward tide, unswept in sport away.
Am I so ruthless then that I do hate
Them who hate me? Tush, tush! I do not hate;
Nay, I forgive. The Statesman writes the doom,
But the Priest sends the blessing. I forgive them,
But I destroy; forgiveness is mine own,
Destruction is the State's! For private life,
Scripture the guide—for public, Machiavel.
Would fortune serve me if the Heaven were wroth?
For chance makes half my greatness. I was born
Beneath the aspect of a bright-eyed star,
And my triumphant adamant of soul
Is but the fix'd persuasion of success.
Ah!—here!—that spasm!—again!—How Life and Death
Do wrestle for me momently! And yet
The King looks pale. I shall outlive the King!
And then, thou insolent Austrian—who didst gibe
At the ungainly, gaunt, and daring lover,
Sleeking thy looks to silken Buckingham,—
Thou shalt—no matter!—I have outlived love.

O! beautiful—all golden—gentle youth!
Making thy palace in the careless front
And hopeful eye of man—ere yet the soul
Hath lost the memories which (so Plato dream'd)
Breathed glory from the earlier star it dwelt in—
Oh! for one gale from thine exulting morning,
Stirring amidst the roses, where of old
Love shook the dew-drops from his glancing hair!
Could I recall the past—or had not set
The prodigal treasures of the bankrupt soul
In one slight bark upon the shoreless sea;
The yoked steer, after his day of toil,
Forgets the goad, and rests—to me alike
Or day or night—Ambition has no rest!
Shall I resign?—who can resign himself?
For custom is ourself; as drink and food
Become our bone and flesh—the aliments
Nurturing our nobler part, the mind—thoughts, dreams,
Passions, and aims, in the revolving cycle
Of the great alchemy—at length are made
Our mind itself; and yet the sweets of leisure—
An honour'd home—far from these base intrigues—
An eyrie on the heaven-kiss'd heights of wisdom—
[*Taking up the book.*
Speak to me, moralist!—I'll heed thy counsel.
Were it not best——

Enter FRANÇOIS *hastily, and in part disguised.*

Rich. [*flinging away the book*]. Philosophy, thou liest!
Quick—the despatch! Power—Empire! Boy—the packet!
Fran. Kill me, my Lord.
Rich. They knew thee—they suspected—
They gave it not——
Fran. He gave it—*he*—the Count
De Baradas—with his own hand he gave it!
Rich. Baradas! Joy! out with it!

Fran. Listen,
And then dismiss me to the headsman.
Rich. Ha!
Go on.
Fran. They led me to a chamber—There
Orleans and Baradas, and some half-score,
Whom I know not—were met——
Rich. Not more!
Fran. But from
The adjoining chamber broke the din of voices,
The clattering tread of arm'd men; at times
A shriller cry, that yell'd out, "Death to Richelieu!"
Rich. Speak not of *me:* thy *country* is in danger!
The adjoining room—So, so—a *separate* treason!
The one thy ruin, France!—the meaner crime,
Left to their tools, my murder!
Fran. Baradas
Question'd me close—demurr'd—until, at last,
O'erruled by Orleans,—gave the packet—told me
That life and death were in the scroll—this gold——
Rich. Gold is no proof——
Fran. And Orleans promised thousands,
When Bouillon's trumpets in the streets of Paris
Rang out shrill answer. Hastening from the house,
My footstep in the stirrup, Marion stole
Across the threshold, whispering, "Lose no moment
Ere Richelieu have the packet: tell him too—
Murder is in the winds of Night, and Orleans
Swears, ere the dawn the Cardinal shall be clay."
She said, and trembling fled within; when, lo!
A hand of iron griped me; through the dark
Gleam'd the dim shadow of an arm'd man:
Ere I could draw—the prize was wrested from me,
And a hoarse voice gasp'd—"Spy, I spare thee, for
This steel is virgin to thy Lord!" with that

He vanish'd.—Scared and trembling for thy safety
I mounted, fled, and, kneeling at thy feet,
Implore thee to acquit my faith—but not,
Like him, to spare my life.

Rich. Who spake of *life?*
I bade thee grasp that treasure as thine *honour*—
A jewel worth whole hecatombs of lives!
Begone!—redeem thine honour—back to Marion—
Or Baradas—or Orleans—track the robber—
Regain the packet—or crawl on to Age—
Age and grey hairs like mine—and know, thou hast lost
That which had made thee great and saved thy country.—
See me not till thou'st bought the right to seek me.—
Away!—Nay, cheer thee, thou hast not fail'd yet,—
There's no such word as "fail!"

Fran. Bless you, my Lord,
For that one smile!—I'll wear it on my heart
To light me back to triumph. [*Exit.*

Rich. The poor youth!
An elder had ask'd life!—I love the young!
For as great men live not in their own time,
But the next race,—so in the young, my soul
Makes many Richelieus. He will win it yet.
Francois!—He's gone. My murder! Marion's warning!
This bravo's threat! Oh for the morrow's dawn!
I'll set my spies to work—I'll make all space
(As does the sun) a Universal Eye—
Huguet shall track—Joseph confess—ha! ha!
Strange, while I laugh'd I shudder'd—and ev'n now
Through the chill air the beating of my heart
Sounds like a death-watch by a sick man's pillow;
If Huguet *could* deceive me—hoofs without—
The gates unclose—steps near and nearer!

Enter JULIE.

Julie. Cardinal!

My father! [*Falls at his feet.*
Rich. Julie at this hour!—and tears!
What ails thee?
Julie. —I am safe; I am with thee!—
Rich. Safe! why, in all the storms of this wide world
What wind would mar the violet?
Julie. That man—
Why did I love him?—clinging to a breast
That knows no shelter?
Listen—late at noon—
The marriage-day—ev'n then no more a lover—
He left me coldly,—well,—I sought my chamber
To weep and wonder—but to hope and dream.
Sudden a mandate from the King—to attend
Forthwith his pleasure at the Louvre.
Rich. Ha!
You did obey the summons; and the King
Reproach'd your hasty nuptials.
Julie. Were that all!
He frown'd and chid; proclaim'd the bond unlawful:
Bade me not quit my chamber in the palace,
And there at night—alone—this night—all still—
He sought my presence—dared—thou read'st the heart,
Read mine!—I cannot speak it!
Rich. He a king,—
You—woman; well,—you yielded!
Julie. Cardinal—
Dare you say "yielded"?—Humbled and abash'd,
He from the chamber crept—this mighty Louis;
Crept like a baffled felon!—yielded! Ah!
More royalty in woman's honest heart
Than dwells within the crown'd majesty
And sceptred anger of a hundred kings!
Yielded!—Heavens!—yielded!
Rich. To my breast,—close—close!

The world would never need a Richelieu, if
Men—bearded, mail'd men—the Lords of Earth—
Resisted flattery, falsehood, avarice, pride,
As this poor child with the dove's innocent scorn
Her sex's tempters, Vanity and Power!—
He left you—well!

Julie. Then came a sharper trial!
At the King's suit the Count de Baradas
Sought me to soothe, to fawn, to flatter, while
On his smooth lip insult appear'd more hateful
For the false mask of pity: letting fall
Dark hints of treachery, with a world of sighs
That Heaven had granted to so base a Lord
The heart whose coldest friendship were to him
What Mexico to misers! Stung at last
By my disdain, the dim and glimmering sense
Of his cloak'd words broke into bolder light,
And THEN—ah! *then,* my haughty spirit fail'd me!
Then I was weak—wept—oh! such bitter tears!
For (turn thy face aside and let me whisper
The horror to thine ear) then did I learn
That he—that Adrien—that my husband—knew
The King's polluting suit, and deem'd it *honour!*
Then all the terrible and loathsome truth
Glared on me;—coldness—waywardness, reserve—
Mystery of looks—words—all unravell'd,—and
I saw the impostor, where I had loved the god!

Rich. I think thou wrong'st thy husband—but proceed.

Julie. Did you say "wrong'd" him?—Cardinal, my father,
Did you say "wrong'd"? Prove it, and life shall grow
One prayer for thy reward and his forgiveness.

Rich. Let me know all.

Julie. To the despair he caused
The courtier left me; but amid the chaos

Darted one guiding ray—to 'scape—to fly—
Reach Adrien, learn the worst—'twas then near midnight:
Trembling I left my chamber—sought the Queen—
Fell at her feet—reveal'd the unholy peril—
Implored her aid to flee our joint disgrace.
Moved, she embraced and soothed me; nay, preserved;
Her word sufficed to unlock the palace-gates:
I hasten'd home—but home was desolate,—
No Adrien there! Fearing the worst, I fled
To thee, directed hither. As my wheels
Paused at thy gates—the clang of arms behind—
The ring of hoofs—

Rich. 'Twas but my guards, fair trembler.
(So Huguet keeps his word, my omens wrong'd him.)

Julie. Oh, in one hour what years of anguish crowd!

Rich. Nay, there's no danger now. Thou needest rest.
Come, thou shalt lodge beside me. Tush! be cheer'd.
My rosiest Amazon—thou wrong'st thy Theseus.
All will be well—yes, yet all well.

[*Exeunt through a side door.*

SCENE II.

Enter HUGUET—DE MAURAT, *in complete armour, his vizor down. The moonlight obscured at the casement.*

Hug. Not here!

De Mau. Oh, I will find him, fear not. Hence and guard
The galleries where the menials sleep—plant sentries
At every outlet—Chance should throw no shadow
Between the vengeance and the victim! Go!—
Ere yon brief vapour that obscures the moon,

As doth our deed pale conscience, pass away,
The mighty shall be ashes.
Hug. Will you not
A second arm?
De Mau. To slay one weak old man?—
Away! No lesser wrongs than mine can make
This murder lawful. Hence!
Hug. A short farewell!
[*Exit* HUGUET.
Re-enter RICHELIEU [*not perceiving* DE MAUPRAT].
Rich. How heavy is the air!—the vestal lamp
Of the sad Moon, weary with vigil, dies
In the still temple of the solemn heaven!
The very darkness lends itself to fear—
To treason——
De Mau. And to death!
Rich. My omens lied not!
What art thou, wretch?
De Mau. Thy doomsman!
Rich. Ho, my guards!
Huguet, Montbrassil! Vermont!
De Mau. Ay, thy spirits
Forsake thee, wizard; thy bold men of mail
Are *my confederates.* Stir not! but one step,
And know the next—thy grave!
Rich. Thou liest, knave!
I am old, infirm—most feeble—but thou liest!
Armand de Richelieu dies not by the hand
Of man—the stars have said it—and the voice
Of my own prophet and oracular soul
Confirms the shining Sibyls! Call them all
Thy brother butchers! Earth has no such fiend—
No! as one parricide of his father-land,
Who dares in Richelieu murder France!
De Mau. Thy stars

Deceive thee, Cardinal; thy soul of wiles
May against kings and armaments avail,
And mock the embattled world; but powerless now
Against the sword of one resolvèd man,
Upon whose forehead thou hast written shame!
Rich. I breathe; he is not a hireling. Have I wrong'd thee?
Beware surmise—suspicion—lies! I am
Too great for men to speak the truth of me!
De Mau. Thy *acts* are thy accusers, Cardinal!
In his hot youth, a soldier, urged to crime
Against the State, placed in your hands his life;—
You did not strike the blow—but o'er his head,
Upon the gossamer thread of your caprice,
Hover'd the axe. His the brave spirit's hell,
The twilight terror of suspense;—your death
Had set him free; he purposed not, nor pray'd it.
One day you summon'd—mock'd him with smooth pardon—
Shower'd wealth upon him—bade an angel's face
Turn Earth to Paradise——
Rich. Well!
De Mau. Was this mercy?
A Cæsar's generous vengeance?—Cardinal, no!
Judas, not Cæsar, was the model! You
Saved him from death for shame; reserved to grow
The scorn of living men—to his dead sires
Leprous reproach—scoff of the age to come—
A kind convenience—a Sir Pandarus
To his own bride, and the august adulterer!
Then did the first great law of human hearts,
Which with the patriot's, not the rebel's, name
Crown'd the first Brutus, when the Tarquin fell,
Make Misery royal—raise this desperate wretch

Into thy destiny! Expect no mercy!
Behold De Mauprat! [*Lifts his vizor.*
Rich. To thy knees, and crawl
For pardon; or, I tell thee, thou shalt live
For such remorse, that, did I hate thee, I
Would bid thee strike, that I might be avenged!
It was to save my Julie from the King,
That in thy valour I forgave thy crime;—
It was, when thou—the rash and ready tool—
Yea, of that shame thou loath'st—didst leave thy hearth
To the polluter—in these arms thy bride
Found the protecting shelter thine withheld.
[*Goes to the side door.*
Julie de Mauprat—Julie!
Enter JULIE.
Lo! my witness!
De Mau. What marvel's this?—I dream! my Julie—*thou!*
This, thy beloved hand?
Julie. Henceforth all bond
Between us twain is broken. Were it not
For this old man, I might, in truth, have lost
The right—now mine—to scorn thee!
Rich. So, you hear her?
De Mau. Thou with some slander hast her sense infected!
Julie. No, sir; he did excuse thee in despite
Of all that wears the face of truth. Thy *friend*—
Thy *confidant*—familiar—*Baradas*—
Himself reveal'd thy baseness.
De Mau. Baseness!
Rich. Ay;
That *thou* didst *court* dishonour.
De Mau. Baradas!

Where is thy thunder, Heaven?—Duped!—snared!—undone!
Thou—thou couldst not believe him! Thou dost love me!
Love cannot feed upon falsehoods!
Julie [*aside*]. Love him! Ah!
Be still, my heart! [*Aloud.*] Love you I did:—how fondly,
Woman—if women were my listeners now—
Alone could tell!—For ever fled my dream:
Farewell—all's over!
Rich. Nay, my daughter, these
Are but the blinding mists of day-break love
Sprung from its very light, and heralding
A noon of happy summer.—Take her hand
And speak the truth, with which your heart runs over—
That this Count Judas—this Incarnate Falsehood—
Never lied more, than when he told thy Julie
That Adrien loved her not—except, indeed,
When he told Adrien, Julie could betray him.
Julie [*embracing* DE MAURPRAT]. You love me, then!—you love me!—and they wrong'd you!
De Mau. Ah! couldst thou doubt it?
Rich. Why, the very mole
Less blind than thou! Baradas loves thy wife;—
Had hoped her hand—aspired to be that cloak
To the King's will, which to thy bluntness seems
The Centaur's poisonous robe—hopes even now
To make thy corpse his footstool to thy bed!
Where was thy wit, man?—Ho! these schemes are glass!
The very sun shines through them.
De Mau. O, my Lord.
Can you forgive me?
Rich. Ay, and save you!
De Mau. Save!—
Terrible word!—O, save *thyself;*—these halls

Swarm with thy foes: already for thy blood
Pants thirsty Murder!
Julie. Murder!
Rich. Hush! put by
The woman. Hush! a shriek—a cry—a breath
Too loud, would startle from its horrent pause
The swooping Death! Go to the door, and listen!—
Now for escape!
De Mau. None—none! Their blades shall pass
This heart to thine.
Rich. [*drily*]. An honourable outwork
But much too near the citadel. I think
That I can trust you now [*slowly, and gazing on him*]:—
yes; I can trust you.
How many of my troop league with you?
De Mau. All!—
We *are* your troop!
Rich. And Huguet?
De Mau. Is our captain.
Rich. A retributive Power!—This comes of spies!
All? then the lion's skin's too short to-night,—
Now for the fox's!——
Julie. A hoarse, gathering murmur!—
Hurrying and heavy footsteps!
Rich. Ha!—the posterns?
De Mau. No egress where no sentry!
Rich. Follow me—
I have it!—to my chamber—quick! Come, Julie!
Hush! Mauprat, come!
[*Murmur at a distance.*]—Death to the Cardinal!
Rich. Bloodhounds, I laugh at ye!—ha! ha!—we will
Baffle them yet.—Ha!—ha!
[*Exeunt* JULIE, MAUPRAT, RICHELIEU.
Hug. [*without*]. This way—this way!

SCENE III.

Enter HUGUET *and the* Conspirators.

Hug. De Mauprat's hand is never slow in battle;—
Strange, if it falter now! Ha! gone!
First Con. Perchance
The fox had crept to rest; and to his lair
Death, the dark hunter, tracks him.
[*Enter* MAUPRAT, *throwing open the doors of the recess, in which a bed, whereon* RICHELIEU *lies extended.*
De Mau. Live the King!
Richelieu is dead!
Hug. [*advancing towards the recess;* MAUPRAT *following, his hand on his dagger*]. Are his eyes open?
De Mau. Ay,
As if in life!
Hug. [*turning back*]. I will not look on him.
You have been long.
De Mau. I watch'd him till he slept.
Heed me.—No trace of blood reveals the deed;—
Strangled in sleep. His health hath long been broken—
Found breathless in his bed. So runs our tale,
Remember! Back to Paris—Orleans gives
Ten thousand crowns, and Baradas a lordship,
To him who first gluts vengeance with the news
That Richelieu is in heaven! Quick, that all France
May share your joy!
Hug. And you?
De Mau. Will stay, to crush
Eager suspicion—to forbid sharp eyes
To dwell too closely on the clay; prepare

The rites, and place him on his bier—this *my* task.
I leave to you, sirs, the more grateful lot
Of wealth and honours. Hence!
Hug. I shall be noble!
De Mau. Away!
First Con. Five thousand crowns!
Omnes. To horse!—to horse! [*Exeunt* Conspirators.

SCENE IV.

Still night—A room in the house of COUNT DE BARADAS, *lighted, &c.*

ORLEANS *and* DE BERINGHEN.

De Ber. I understand. Mauprat kept guard without:
Knows nought of the despatch—but heads the troop
Whom the poor Cardinal fancies his protectors.
Save us from such protection!
Orle. Yet, if Huguet,
By whose advice and proffers we renounced
Our earlier scheme, should still be Richelieu's minion,
And play us false—
De Ber. The fox must then devour
The geese he gripes (I'm out of it, thank Heaven!)
And you must swear you smelt the trick, but seem'd
To approve the deed—to render up the doers.

Enter BARADAS.

Bar. Julie is fled:—the King, whom now I left
To a most thorny pillow, vows revenge
On her—on Mauprat—and on Richelieu! Well;
We loyal men anticipate his wish
Upon the last—and as for Mauprat,— [*showing a writ.*
De Ber. Hum!
They say the devil invented printing! Faith,

He has some hand in writing parchment—eh, Count?
What mischief now?

Bar. The King, at Julie's flight
Enraged, will brook no rival in a subject—
So on this old offence—the affair of Faviaux—
Ere Mauprat can tell tales of *us,* we build
His bridge between the dungeon and the grave.

Orle. Well; if our courier can but reach the army,
The cards are ours!—and yet, I own, I tremble.
Our names are in the scroll—discovery, death!

Bar. Success, a crown!

De Ber. [*apart to* BARADAS]. Our future Regent is
No hero.

Bar. [*to* DE BERINGHEN]. But his rank makes others valiant;
And on his cowardice I mount to power.
Were Orleans Regent—what were Baradas?
Oh! by the way—I had forgot, your Highness,
Friend Huguet whisper'd me, "Beware of Marion:
I've seen her lurking near the Cardinal's palace."
Upon that hint, I've found her lodging elsewhere.

Orle. You wrong her, Count. Poor Marion!—she adores me.

Bar. [*apologetically*]. Forgive me, but—

Enter Page.

Page. My Lord, a rude, strange soldier,
Breathless with haste, demands an audience.

Bar. So!—
The archers?

Page. In the ante-room, my Lord,
As you desired.

Bar. 'Tis well—admit the soldier. [*Exit* Page.
Huguet!—I bade him seek me here.

Enter HUGUET.

Hug. My Lords,

The deed is done. Now, Count, fulfil your word,
And make me noble!
Bar. Richelieu dead?—art sure?
How died he?
Hug. Strangled in his sleep:—no blood,
No tell-tale violence.
Bar. Strangled?—monstrous villain!
Reward for murder! Ho, there! [*Stamping.*
Enter Captain *with five* Archers.
Hug. No, thou durst not!
Bar. Seize on the ruffian—bind him—gag him! Off
To the Bastille!
Hug. Your word—your plighted faith!
Bar. Insolent liar! ho, away!
Hug. Nay, Count;
I have that about me, which——
Bar. Away with him!
[*Exeunt* HUGUET *and* Archers.
Now, then, all's safe; Huguet must die in prison,
So Mauprat:—coax or force the meaner crew
To fly the country. Ha, ha! thus, your highness,
Great men make use of little men.
De Ber. My Lords,
Since our suspense is ended—you'll excuse me;
'Tis late—and, *entre nous,* I have not supp'd yet!
I'm one of the new Council now, remember;
I feel the public stirring here already;
A very craving monster. *Au revoir!*
[*Exit* DE BERINGHEN.
Orle. No fear, now Richelieu's dead.
Bar. And could he come
To life again, he could not keep life's life—
His power,—nor save De Mauprat from the scaffold,—
Nor Julie from these arms—nor Paris from
The Spaniard—nor your highness from the throne!

All ours! all ours! in spite of my Lord Cardinal!

Enter Page.

Page. A gentleman, my Lord, of better mien
Than he who last——

Bar. Well, he may enter. [*Exit* Page.

Orle. Who
Can this be?

Bar. One of the conspirators:
Mauprat himself, perhaps.

Enter FRANCOIS.

Fran. My Lord——

Bar. Ha, traitor!
In Paris still?

Fran. The packet—the despatch—
Some knave play'd spy without, and reft it from me,
Ere I could draw my sword.

Bar. Play'd spy *without!*
Did he wear armour?

Fran. Ay, from head to heel.

Orle. One of our band. Oh, Heavens!

Bar. Could it be Mauprat?
Kept guard at the *door*—knew *nought of the despatch*—
How HE?—and yet, who other?

Fran. Ha, De Mauprat!
The night was dark—his vizor closed.

Bar. 'Twas he!
How could he guess?—'sdeath! if he should betray us.
His hate to Richelieu dies with Richelieu—and
He was not great enough for treason. Hence!
Find Mauprat—beg, steal, filch, or force it back,
Or, as I live, the halter——

Fran. By the morrow
I will regain it [*aside*], and redeem my honour!

[*Exit* FRANCOIS.

Orle. Oh, we are lost—

Bar. Not so! But cause on cause
For Mauprat's seizure—silence—death! Take courage.
Orle. Should it once reach the King, the Cardinal's arm
Could smite us from the grave.
Bar. Sir, think it not!
I hold De Mauprat in my grasp. To-morrow,
And France is ours! Thou dark and fallen Angel,
Whose name on earth's AMBITION—thou that mak'st
Thy throne on treasons, stratagems, and murder,—
And with thy fierce and blood-red smile canst quench
The guiding stars of solemn empire—hear us
(For we are thine)—and light us to the goal!

ACT IV.

THIRD DAY.

SCENE I.—*The Gardens of the Louvre.*—ORLEANS, BARADAS, DE BERINGHEN, Courtiers, &c.

Orle. How does my brother bear the Cardinal's death?
Bar. With grief, when thinking of the toils of State;
With joy, when thinking on the eyes of Julie:—
At times he sighs, "Who now shall govern France?"
Anon exclaims—"Who now shall baffle Louis?"
Enter LOUIS *and other* Courtiers. [*They uncover.*
Orle. Now, my liege, now, I can embrace a brother.
Louis. Dear Gaston, yes.—I do believe you *love* me;—
Richelieu denied it—sever'd us too long.
A great man, Gaston! Who shall govern France?
Bar. Yourself, my liege. That swart and potent star
Eclipsed your royal orb. He served the country,
But did he *serve,* or seek to *sway* the *King?*
[*Louis.* You're right—he was an able politician—
That's all:—between ourselves, Count, I suspect
The largeness of his learning—specially
In falcons—a poor huntsman, too!
Bar. Ha—ha!
Your Majesty remembers——
Louis. Ay, the blunder
Between the *greffier* and the *souillard* when—
[*Checks and crosses himself.*
Alas! poor sinners that we are! we laugh
While this great man—a priest, a cardinal,
A faithful servant—out upon us!—

Bar. Sire,
If my brow wear no cloud, 'tis that the Cardinal
No longer shades the King.
Louis [*looking up at the skies*]. Oh, Baradas!
Am I not to be pitied?—what a day
For—
Bar. Sorrow?—No, sire!
Louis. Bah! for *hunting,* man,
And Richelieu's dead; 'twould be an indecorum
Till he is buried—[*yawns*]—life is very tedious.
I made a madrigal on life last week:
You do not sing, Count?—Pity; you should learn.
Poor Richelieu had no ear—yet a great man.
Ah! what a weary weight devolves upon me!
These endless wars—these thankless Parliaments—
The snares in which he tangled States and Kings,
Like the old fisher of the fable, Proteus,
Netting great Neptune's wariest tribes, and changing
Into all shapes when Craft pursued himself:
Oh, a great man!
Bar. Your royal mother said so,
And died in exile.
Louis [*sadly*]. True: I loved my mother.
Bar. The Cardinal dies.—Yet day revives the earth;
The rivers run not back. In truth, my liege,
Did your high orb on others shine as him,
Why, things as dull in their own selves as I am
Would glow as brightly with the borrow'd beam.
Louis. Ahem!—He was too stern.
Orle. A very Nero.
Bar. His power was like the Capitol of old—
Built on a human skull.
Louis. And, had he lived,
I know another head, my Baradas,
That would have propp'd the pile: I've seen him eye thee

With a most hungry fancy.

Bar. [*anxiously*]. Sire, I knew
You would protect me.

Louis. Did you so? of course!
And yet he had a way with him—a something
That always——But no matter—he is dead.
And, after all, men call his King "The Just,"
And so I am. Dear Count, this silliest Julie,
I know not why, she takes my fancy. Many
As fair, and certainly more kind; but yet
It is so. Count, I am no lustful Tarquin,
And do abhor the bold and frontless vices
Which the Church justly censures; yet, 'tis sad
On rainy days to drag out weary hours—
Deaf to the music of a woman's voice—
Blind to the sunshine of a woman's eyes.
It is no sin in Kings to seek amusement;
And that is all I seek. I miss her much—
She has a silver laugh—a rare perfection.

Bar. Richelieu was most disloyal in that marriage.]

Louis [*querulously*]. He knew that Julie pleased me:—
a clear proof
He never loved me!

Bar. Oh, most clear!—But now
No bar between the lady and your will!
This writ makes all secure: a week or two
In the Bastille will sober Mauprat's love,
And leave him eager to dissolve a hymen
That brings him such a home.

Louis. See to it, Count.

[*Exit* BARADAS.

I'll summon Julie back. A word with you.

[*Takes aside* First Courtier, *and* DE BERINGHEN, *and passes, conversing with them, through the Gardens.*

Enter FRANÇOIS.

Fran. All search, as yet, in vain for Mauprat!—Not
At home since yesternoon—a soldier told me
He saw him pass this way with hasty strides;
Should he meet Baradas—they'd rend it from him—
And then—benignant Fortune smiles upon me—
I am thy son!—if thou desert'st me now,
Come, Death, and snatch me from disgrace. But, no,
There's a great Spirit ever in the air
That from prolific and far-spreading wings
Scatters the seeds of honour—yea, the walls
And moats of castled forts—the barren seas—
The cell wherein the pale-eyed student holds
Talk with melodious science—all are sown
With everlasting honours, if our souls
Will toil for fame as boors for bread—

Enter MAUPRAT.

De Mau. Oh, let me—
Let me but meet him foot to foot—I'll dig
The Judas from his heart;—albeit the King
Should o'er him cast the purple!

Fran. Mauprat! hold:—
Where is the——

De Mau. Well! What wouldst thou?

Fran. The despatch!
The packet.—LOOK ON ME—I serve the Cardinal—
You know me.—Did you not keep guard last night
By Marion's house?

De Mau. I did;—no matter now!
They told me, *he* was *here!*—

Fran. O joy! quick—quick—
The packet thou didst wrest from me?

De Mau. The packet?
What, art thou he I deem'd the Cardinal's spy
(Dupe that I was)—and overhearing Marion—

Fran. The same—restore it! haste!
De Mau. I have it not:
Methought it but reveal'd our scheme to Richelieu,
And, as we mounted, gave it to——
Enter BARADAS.
Stand back!
Now, villain! now—I have thee!
[*To* FRANÇOIS.] Hence, sir!—*Draw!*
Fran. Art mad?—the King's at hand! leave *him* to Richelieu!
Speak—the despatch—to whom—
De Mau. [*dashing him aside, and rushing to* BARADAS]. Thou triple slanderer!
I'll set my heel upon thy crest! [*A few passes.*
Fran. Fly—fly!—
The King!
Enter at one side LOUIS, ORLEANS, DE BERINGHEN, Courtiers, *&c.; at the other, the* Guards *hastily.*
Louis. Swords drawn—before our very palace!
Have our laws died with Richelieu?
Bar. Pardon, Sire,—
My crime but self-defence. [*Aside to* King.] It is De Mauprat!
Louis. Dare he thus brave us?
[BARADAS *goes to the* Guard, *and gives the writ.*
De Mau. Sire, in the Cardinal's name—
Bar. Seize him—disarm—to the Bastille!
[DE MAUPRAT *seized, struggles with the* Guard—FRANÇOIS *restlessly endeavouring to pacify and speak to him—when the gates open. Enter* RICHELIEU—JOSEPH—*followed by* Arquebusiers.
Bar. The Dead
Return'd to life!
Louis. What a *mock* death! this tops
The Infinite of Insult.

De Mau. [*breaking from the* Guards]. Priest and Hero!—
For you are both—protect the truth!
Rich. [*taking the writ from the* Guard]. What's this?
De Ber. Fact in Philosophy. Foxes have got
Nine lives, as well as cats!
Bar. Be firm, my liege.
Louis. I have assumed the sceptre—I will wield it!
Joseph. The tide runs counter—there'll be shipwreck somewhere.

[BARADAS *and* ORLEANS *keep close to the* King, *whispering and prompting him when* RICHELIEU *speaks.*

Rich. High treason—Faviaux! still that stale pretence!
My liege, bad men (ay, Count, most *knavish* men!)
Abuse your royal goodness. For this soldier,
France hath none braver—and his youth's hot folly,
Misled—(by whom *your Highness* may conjecture!)—
Is long since cancell'd by a loyal manhood.—
I, Sire, have pardon'd him.
Louis. And we do give
Your pardon to the winds. Sir, do your duty!
Rich. What, Sire?—you do not know—Oh, pardon me—
You know not yet, that this brave, honest heart,
Stood between mine and murder!—Sire! for my sake—
For your old servant's sake—undo this wrong.
See, let me rend the sentence.
Louis. At your peril!
This is too much:—Again, sir, do your duty!
Rich. Speak not, but go:—I would not see young Valour
So humbled as grey Service.
De Mau. Fare you well!
Save Julie, and console her.
Fran. [*aside to* MAUPRAT]. The despatch!

Your fate, foes, life, hang on a word!—to whom?
De Mau. To Huguet.
Fran. Hush—keep counsel!—silence—hope!
[*Exeunt* MAUPRAT *and* Guard.
Bar. [*aside to* FRANCOIS]. Has he the packet?
Fran. He will not reveal—
[*Aside.*] Work, brain!—beat, heart!—"*There's no such word as fail!*" [*Exit* FRANCOIS.
Rich. [*fiercely*]. Room, my Lords, room!—the Minister of France
Can need no intercession with the King. [*They fall back.*
Louis. What means this false report of death, Lord Cardinal?
Rich. Are you then anger'd, Sire, that I live still?
Louis. No; but such artifice—
Rich. Not mine:—look elsewhere!
Louis—my castle swarm'd with the assassins.
Bar. [*advancing*]. We have punish'd them already. Huguet now
In the Bastille.—Oh! my Lord, *we* were prompt
To avenge you—*we* were—
Rich. We?—Ha, ha! you hear,
My liege! What page, man, in the last court grammar
Made you a plural? Count, you have seized the *hireling:*—
Sire, shall I name the *master?*
Louis. Tush, my Lord,
The old contrivance:—ever does your wit
Invent assassins,—that ambition may
Slay rivals——
Rich. Rivals, Sire, in what?
Service to France? *I have none!* Lives the man
Whom Europe, paled before your glory, deems
Rival to Armand Richelieu?
Louis. What, so haughty!
Remember, he who made, can unmake.

Rich. Never!
Never! Your anger can recall your trust,
Annul my office, spoil me of my lands,
Rifle my coffers,—but my name—my deeds,
Are royal in a land beyond your sceptre!
Pass sentence on me, if you will; from Kings,
Lo! I appeal to time! [Be just, my liege—
I found your kingdom rent with heresies
And bristling with rebellion; lawless nobles
And breadless serfs; England fomenting discord;
Austria—her clutch on your dominion; Spain
Forging the prodigal gold of either Ind
To arm'd thunderbolts. The Arts lay dead,
Trade rotted in your marts, your Armies mutinous,
Your Treasury bankrupt. Would you now revoke
Your trust, so be it! and I leave you, sole
Supremest Monarch of the mightiest realm,
From Ganges to the Icebergs:—Look without;
No foe not humbled!—Look within; the Arts
Quit for your schools—their old Hesperides
The golden Italy! while through the veins
Of your vast empire flows in strengthening tides
TRADE, the calm health of nations!
Sire, I know
Your smoother courtiers please you best—nor measure
Myself with them,—yet sometimes I would doubt
If Statesmen rock'd and dandled into power
Could leave such legacies to kings!
[LOUIS *appears irresolute.*
Bar. [*passing him, whispers.*] But Julie,
Shall I not summon her to court?]
Louis [*motions to* BARADAS, *and turns haughtily to the* Cardinal]. Enough!
Your Eminence must excuse a longer audience.
To your own palace:—For our conference, this

Nor place—nor season.

Rich. Good my liege, for *Justice*
All place a temple, and all season, summer!—
Do you deny me justice?—Saints of Heaven!
He turns from me!—*Do you deny me justice?*
For fifteen years, while in these hands dwelt Empire,
The humblest craftsman—the obscurest vassal—
The very leper shrinking from the sun,
Though loathed by Charity, might ask for justice!—
Not with the fawning tone and crawling mien
Of some I see around you—Counts and Princes—
Kneeling for *favours;*—but, erect and loud,
As men who ask man's rights!—my liege, my Louis,
Do you refuse me justice—audience even—
In the pale presence of the baffled Murther?

Louis. Lord Cardinal—one by one you have sever'd from me
The bonds of human love. All near and dear
Mark'd out for vengeance—exile or the scaffold.
You find me now amidst my trustiest friends,
My closest kindred;—you would tear them from me;
They murder *you* forsooth, since *me* they love!
Eno' of plots and treasons for one reign!
Home!—Home! and sleep away these phantoms!

Rich. Sire!
I——patience, Heaven!—sweet Heaven! Sire, from the foot
Of that Great Throne, these hands have raised aloft
On an Olympus, looking down on mortals
And worshipp'd by their awe—before the foot
Of that high throne,—spurn you the grey-hair'd man,
Who gave you empire—and now sues for safety?

Louis. No:—when we see your Eminence in truth
At the *foot* of the throne—we'll listen to you.

[*Exit* Louis.

Orle. Saved!
Bar. For this deep thanks to Julie and to Mauprat!
Rich. My Lord de Baradas—I pray your pardon—
You are to be my successor!—your hand, sir!
Bar. [*aside*]. What can this mean?
Rich. It trembles, see! it trembles!
The hand that holds the destinies of nations
Ought to shake less!—poor Baradas—poor France!
Bar. Insolent——

[*Exeunt* BARADAS *and* ORLEANS.

SCENE II.

Rich. Joseph—Did you hear the King?
Joseph. I did—there's danger! Had you been less haughty——
Rich. And suffer'd slaves to chuckle—"See the Cardinal—
How meek his Eminence is to-day"—I tell thee
This is a strife in which the loftiest look
Is the most subtle armour——
Joseph. But——
Rich. No time
For ifs and buts. I will accuse these traitors!
Francois shall witness that De Baradas
Gave him the secret missive for De Bouillon,
And told him life and death were in the scroll.
I will—I will—
Joseph. Tush! Francois is your creature;
So they will say, and laugh at you!—*your witness*
Must be that same Despatch.
Rich. Away to Marion!
Joseph. I have been there—she is seized—removed—imprison'd—

By the Count's orders.

Rich. Goddess of bright dreams,
My country—shalt thou lose me now, when most
Thou need'st thy worshipper? My native land!
Let me but ward this dagger from thy heart,
And die—but on thy bosom!

Enter JULIE.

Julie. Heaven! I thank thee!
It cannot be, or this all-powerful man
Would not stand idly thus.

Rich. What dost *thou* here?
Home!

Julie. Home!—is *Adrien there?*—you're dumb—yet strive
For words; I see them trembling on your lip,
But choked by pity. It *was* truth—all truth!
Seized—the Bastille—and in your presence, too!
Cardinal, where is Adrien?—Think—he saved
Your life:—your name is infamy, if wrong
Should come to his!

Rich. Be soothed, child.

Julie. Child no more;
I love, and I am woman! Hope and suffer—
Love, suffering, hope,—what else doth make the strength
And majesty of woman?—Where is Adrien?

Rich. [*to* JOSEPH]. Your youth was never young—you never loved:—
Speak to her—

Joseph. Nay, take heed—the King's command,
'Tis true—I mean—the—

Julie [*to* RICHELIEU]. Let thine eyes meet mine;
Answer me but one word—I am a wife—
I ask thee for my *home*—my FATE—my ALL!
Where is my *husband?*

Rich. You are Richelieu's ward,

A soldier's bride: they who insist on truth
Must out-face fear;—you ask me for your husband?
There—where the clouds of Heaven look darkest, o'er
The domes of the Bastille!
Julie. I thank you, father;
You see I do not shudder. Heaven forgive you
The sin of this desertion!
Rich. [*detaining her*]. Whither wouldst thou?
Julie. Stay me not. Fie! I should be there already.
I am thy ward, and haply he may think
Thou'st taught *me* also to forsake the wretched!
Rich. I've fill'd those cells—with many—traitors all.
Had *they* wives too?—Thy memories, Power, are solemn!
Poor sufferer!—think'st thou that yon gates of woe
Unbar to love? Alas! if love once enter,
'Tis for the last farewell; between those walls
And the mute grave—the blessed household sounds
Only heard once—while hungering at the door,
The headsman whets the axe.
Julie. O, mercy! mercy!
Save him, restore him, father! Art thou not
The Cardinal-King?—the Lord of life and death—
Beneath whose light, as deeps beneath the moon,
The solemn tides of Empire ebb and flow?
Art thou not Richelieu?
Rich. Yesterday I was!—
To-day, a very weak old man!—To-morrow,
I know not what!
Julie. Do you conceive his meaning?
Alas! I cannot. But, methinks, my senses
Are duller than they were!
Joseph. The King is chafed
Against his servant. Lady, while we speak,
The lackey of the ante-room is not
More powerless than the Minister of France.

[*Rich.* And yet the air is still; Heaven wears no cloud;
From Nature's silent orbit starts no portent
To warn the unconscious world; albeit this night
May with a morrow teem which, in my fall,
Would carry earthquake to remotest lands,
And change the Christian globe. What wouldst thou, woman?
Thy fate and his, with mine, for good or ill,
Are woven threads. In my vast sum of life
Millions such units merge.]

Enter First Courtier.

First Cour. Madame de Mauprat!
Pardon, your Eminence—even now I seek
This lady's home—commanded by the King
To pray her presence.

Julie [*clinging to* RICHELIEU]. Think of my dead father!—
Think, how, an infant, clinging to your knees,
And looking to your eyes, the wrinkled care
Fled from your brow before the smile of childhood,
Fresh from the dews of Heaven! Think of this,
And take me to your breast.

Rich. To those who sent you!—
And say you found the virtue they would slay
Here—couch'd upon this heart, as at an altar,
And shelter'd by the wings of sacred Rome!
Begone!

First Cour. My Lord, I am your friend and servant—
Misjudge me not; but never yet was Louis
So roused against you:—shall I take this answer?—
It were to be your foe.

Rich. All time my foe,
If I, a Priest, could cast this holy Sorrow
Forth from her last asylum!

First Cour. He is lost! [*Exit* First Courtier.

Rich. God help thee, child!—she hears not! Look upon her!
The storm, that rends the oak, uproots the flower.
Her father loved me so! and in that age
When friends are brothers! She has been to me
Soother, nurse, plaything, daughter. Are these tears?
Oh! shame, shame!—dotage!
Joseph. Tears are not for eyes
That rather need the lightning, which can pierce
Through barrèd gates and triple walls, to smite
Crime, where it cowers in secret!—The Despatch!
Set every spy to work;—the morrow's sun
Must see that written treason in your hands,
Or rise upon your ruin.
Rich. Ay—and close
Upon my corpse!—I am not made to live—
Friends, glory, France, all reft from me;—my star
Like some vain holiday mimicry of fire,
Piercing imperial Heaven, and falling down
Rayless and blacken'd, to the dust—a thing
For all men's feet to trample! Yea!—to-morrow
Triumph or death! Look up, child!—Lead us, Joseph.

[*As they are going out, enter* BARADAS *and* DE BERINGHEN.

Bar. My Lord, the King cannot believe your Eminence
So far forgets your duty, and his greatness,
As to resist his mandate! Pray you, Madam,
Obey the King—no cause for fear!
Julie. My father!
Rich. She shall not stir!
Bar. You are not of her kindred—
An orphan—
Rich. And her country is her mother!
Bar. The country is the King!
Rich. Ay, is it so?—

Then wakes the power which in the age of iron
Burst forth to curb the great, and raise the low.
Mark, where she stands!—around her form I draw
The awful circle of our solemn church!
Set but a foot within that holy ground,
And on thy head—yea, though it wore a crown—
I launch the curse of Rome!

Bar. I dare not brave you!
I do but speak the orders of my King,
The church, your rank, power, very word, my Lord,
Suffice you for resistance:—blame yourself,
If it should cost you power!

Rich. That *my* stake.—Ah!
Dark gamester! *what is thine?* Look to it well!—
Lose not a trick.—By this same hour to-morrow
Thou shalt have France, or I thy head!

Bar. [*aside to* De Beringhen]. He cannot
Have the Despatch?

De Ber. No: were it so, your stake
Were lost already.

Joseph [*aside*]. Patience is your game:
Reflect, you have not the Despatch!

Rich. O! monk!
Leave patience to the saints—for *I* am human!
Did not thy father die for France, poor orphan?
And now they say thou hast *no* father!—Fie!
Art thou not pure and good?—if so, thou art
A part of that—the Beautiful, the Sacred—
Which, in all climes, men that have hearts adore,
By the great title of their mother country!

Bar. [*aside*]. He wanders!

Rich. So cling close unto my breast,
Here where thou droop'st lies France. I am very feeble—
Of little use it seems to either now.

Well, well—we will go home.

Bar. In sooth, my Lord,
You do need rest—the burthens of the State
O'ertask your health!

Rich. [*to* JOSEPH]. I'm patient, see!

Bar. [*aside*]. His mind
And life are breaking fast!

Rich. [*overhearing him*]. Irreverent ribald!
If so, beware the falling ruins! Hark!
I tell thee, scorner of these whitening hairs,
When this snow melteth there shall come a flood!
Avaunt! my name is Richelieu—I defy thee!
Walk blindfold on; behind thee stalks the headsman.
Ha! ha!—how pale he is! Heaven save my country!

[*Falls back in* JOSEPH'S *arms.*

[BARADAS *exit, followed by* DE BERINGHEN, *betraying his exultation by his gestures.*

ACT V.

FOURTH DAY.

SCENE I.—*The Bastille—a Corridor; in the back-ground the door of one of the condemned cells.*

Enter JOSEPH *and* Gaoler.

Gaoler. Stay, father; I will call the Governor.

[*Exit* Gaoler.

Joseph. He has it, then—this Huguet;—so we learn
From Francois;—Humph! Now if I can but gain
One moment's access, all is ours! The Cardinal
Trembles 'tween life and death. His life is power;
Smite one—slay both! No Æsculapian drugs,
By learnèd quacks baptized with Latin jargon,
E'er bore the healing which that scrap of parchment
Will medicine to Ambition's flagging heart.
France shall be saved—and Joseph be a bishop.

Enter Governor *and* Gaoler.

Gov. Father, you wish to see the prisoners Huguet
And the young knight De Mauprat?

Joseph. So my office,
And the Lord Cardinal's order, warrant, son!

Gov. Father, it cannot be: Count Baradas
Has summon'd to the Louvre Sieur de Mauprat.

Joseph. Well, well! But Huguet——

Gov. Dies at noon.

Joseph. At noon!
No moment to delay the pious rites
Which fit the soul for death. Quick—quick—admit me!

Gov. You cannot enter, monk! Such are my orders!

Joseph. Orders, vain man!—the Cardinal still is minister.

His orders crush all others!
Gov. [*lifting his hat*]. Save his king's!
See, monk, the royal sign and seal affix'd
To the Count's mandate. None may have access
To either prisoner, Huguet or De Mauprat,
Not even a priest, without the special passport
Of Count de Baradas. I'll hear no more!
Joseph. Just Heaven! and are we baffled thus? Despair!
Think on the Cardinal's power—beware his anger.
Gov. I'll not be menaced, Priest! Besides, the Cardinal
Is dying and disgraced—all Paris knows it.
You hear the prisoner's knell! [*Bell tolls.*
Joseph. I do beseech you—
The Cardinal is *not* dying. But one moment,
And—hist!—five thousand pistoles!—
Gov. How! a bribe!—
And to a soldier, grey with years of honour!
Begone!—
Joseph. Ten thousand—twenty!—
Gov. Gaoler; put
This monk without our walls.
Joseph. By those grey hairs—
Yea, by this badge [*touching the cross of St. Louis worn by the* Governor]—The guerdon of your valour—
By all your toils—hard days and sleepless nights—
Borne in your country's service, noble son—
Let me but see the prisoner!—
Gov. No!
Joseph. He hath
Secrets of state—papers in which——
Gov. [*interrupting*]. I know—
Such was his message to Count Baradas:
Doubtless the Count will see to it!
Joseph. The Count!
Then not a hope!—You shall——

Gov. Betray my trust!
Never—not one word more. You heard me, gaoler!
Joseph. What can be done? Distraction! Richelieu yet
Must—what?—I know not! Thought, nerve, strength, forsake me.
Dare you refuse the Church her holiest rights?
Gov. I refuse nothing—I obey my orders.
Joseph. And sell your country to her parricides!
Oh, tremble yet!—Richelieu——
Gov. Begone!
Joseph. Undone! [*Exit* Joseph.
Gov. A most audacious shaveling—interdicted
Above all others by the Count.
Gaoler. I hope, sir,
I shall not lose my perquisites. The Sieur
De Mauprat will not be reprieved?
Gov. Oh, fear not:
The Count's commands by him who came for Mauprat
Are to prepare headsman and axe by noon;
The Count will give you perquisites enough—
Two deaths in one day!
Gaoler. Sir, may Heaven reward him!
Oh, by the way, that troublesome young fellow,
Who calls himself the prisoner Huguet's son
Is here again—implores, weeps, raves to see him.
Gov. Poor youth, I pity him!
Enter De Beringhen, *followed by* Francois.
De Ber. [*to* Francois]. Now, prithee, friend,
Let go my cloak; you really discompose me.
Fran. No, they will drive me hence: my father! Oh!
Let me but see him once—but once—one moment!
De Ber. [*to* Governor]. Your servant, Messire; this poor rascal, Huguet,
Has sent to see the Count de Baradas
Upon state secrets, that afflict his conscience.

The Count can't leave his Majesty an instant:
I am his proxy.
Gov. The Count's word is law!
Again, young scapegrace! How com'st thou admitted?
De Ber. Oh! a most filial fellow: Huguet's son!
I found him whimpering in the court below.
I pray his leave to say good-bye to father,
Before that very long, unpleasant journey,
Father's about to take. Let him wait here
Till I return.
Fran. No; take me with you.
De Ber. Nay;
After *me,* friend—the Public first!
Gov. The Count's
Commands are strict. No one must visit Huguet
Without his passport.
De Ber. Here it is! Pshaw! nonsense!
I'll be your surety. See, my Cerberus,
He is no Hercules!
Gov. Well, you're responsible.
Stand there, friend. If, when you come out, my Lord,
The youth slip in, 'tis *your* fault.
De Ber. So it is!
[*Exit through the door of the cell, followed by the* Gaoler.
Gov. Be calm, my lad. Don't fret so. I had once
A father, too! I'll not be hard upon you,
And so, stand close. I must not *see* you enter:
You understand! Between this innocent youth
And that intriguing monk there is, in truth,
A wide distinction.
Re-enter Gaoler.
Come, we'll go our rounds;
I'll give you just one quarter of an hour;
And if my Lord leave first, make my excuse.

Yet stay, the gallery's long and dark: no sentry
Until he reach the grate below. He'd best
Wait till I come. If he should lose the way,
We may not be in call.
Fran. I'll tell him, sir.
[*Exeunt* Governor *and* Gaoler.
He's a wise son that knoweth his own father.
I've forged a precious one! So far, so well!
Alas! what then? this wretch hath sent to Baradas—
Will sell the scroll to ransom life. Oh, Heaven!
On what a thread hangs hope! [*Listens at the door.*
Loud words—a cry!
[*Looks through the keyhole.*
They struggle! Ho!—the packet!!!
[*Tries to open the door.*
Lost! He has it—
The courtier has it—Huguet, spite his chains,
Grapples!—well done! Now—now! [*Draws back.*
The gallery's long—
And this is left us!
[*Drawing his dagger, and standing behind the door.*
Re-enter De Beringhen *with the packet.*
Victory!
Yield it, robber—
Yield it—or die— [*A short struggle.*
De Ber. Off! ho!—there!—
Fran. [*grappling with him*]. Death or honour!
[*Exeunt struggling.*

SCENE II.

The King's *closet at the Louvre. A suite of rooms in perspective at one side.*

Baradas *and* Orleans.

Bar. All smiles! the Cardinal's swoon of yesterday

Heralds his death to-day. Could he survive,
It would not be as minister—so great
The King's resentment at the priest's defiance!
All smiles!—And yet, should this accursed De Mauprat
Have given our packet to another—'Sdeath!
I dare not think of it!

Orle. You've sent to search him?

Bar. Sent, sir, to search?—that hireling hands may find
Upon him, naked, with its broken seal,
That scroll, whose every word is death! No—No—
These hands alone must clutch that awful secret.
I dare not leave the palace, night nor day,
While Richelieu lives—his minions—creatures—spies—
Not one must reach the King!

Orle. What has thou done?

Bar. Summon'd De Mauprat hither.

Orle. Could this Huguet,
Who pray'd thy presence with so fierce a fervour,
Have thieved the scroll?

Bar. Huguet was housed with us,
The very moment we dismiss'd the courier.
It cannot be! a stale trick for reprieve.
But, to make sure, I've sent our trustiest friend
To see and sift him.—Hist!—here comes the King—
How fare you, Sire?

Enter Louis.

Louis. In the same mind. I have
Decided!—Yes, he would forbid your presence
My brother—yours, my friend,—then Julie, too!
Thwarts—braves—defies—[*suddenly turning to* Baradas]
We make you minister.
Gaston, for you—the bâton of our armies.
You love me, do you not?

Orle. Oh, love you, Sire?
[*Aside.*] Never so much as now.

Bar. May I deserve
Your trust [*aside*] until you sign your abdication!
My liege, but one way left to daunt De Mauprat,
And Julie to divorce.—We must prepare
The death-writ; what, though sign'd and seal'd? we can
Withhold the enforcement.
Louis. Ah, you may prepare it;
We need not urge to effect.
Bar. Exactly!
No haste, my liege. [*Looking at his watch and aside.*] He may live one hour longer.

Enter Courtier.

Cour. The Lady Julie, Sire, implores an audience.
Louis. Aha! repentant of her folly!—Well,
Admit her.
Bar. Sire, she comes for Mauprat's pardon,
And the conditions——
Louis. You are minister—
We leave to you our answer.

[*As* JULIE *enters, the* Captain of the Archers *by another door, and whispers* BARADAS.

Capt. The Chevalier
De Mauprat waits below.
Bar. [*aside*]. Now the despatch!

[*Exit with* Officer.

Enter JULIE.

Julie. My liege, you sent for me. I come where Grief
Should come when guiltless, while the name of King
Is holy on the earth! Here, at the feet
Of Power, I kneel for mercy.
Louis. Mercy, Julie,
Is an affair of state. The Cardinal should
In this be your interpreter.
Julie. Alas!
I know not if that mighty spirit now

Stoop to the things of earth. Nay, while I speak,
Perchance he hears the orphan by the throne
Where kings themselves need pardon; O my liege,
Be father to the fatherless; in you
Dwells my last hope!

Enter BARADAS.

Bar. [*aside*]. He has not the despatch;
Smiled, while we search'd, and braves me.—Oh!
Louis [*gently*]. What wouldst thou?
Julie. A single life.—You reign o'er millions.—What
Is *one man's* life to you?—and yet to *me*
'Tis France—'tis earth—'tis everything!—a life—
A human life—my husband's.
Louis [*aside*]. Speak to her,
I am not marble,—give her hope—or——
Bar. Madam,
Vex not your King, whose heart, too soft for justice,
Leaves to his ministers that solemn charge.

[LOUIS *walks up the stage.*

Julie. You *were* his friend.
Bar. I *was* before I loved thee.
Julie. Loved me!
Bar. Hush, Julie: couldst thou misinterpret
My acts, thoughts, motives, nay, my very words,
Here—in this palace?
Julie. Now I know I'm mad;
Even that memory fail'd me.
Bar. I am young,
Well-born and brave as Mauprat!—for thy sake
I peril what he has not—fortune—power;
All to great souls most dazzling. I alone
Can save thee from yon tyrant, now my puppet!
Be mine; annul the mockery of this marriage,
And on the day I clasp thee to my breast
De Mauprat shall be free.

Julie. Thou durst not speak
Thus in *his* ear [*pointing to* Louis]. Thou double traitor!
—tremble!
I will unmask thee.
Bar. I will say thou ravest.
And see this scroll! its letters shall be blood!
Go to the King, count with me word for word;
And while you pray the life—I write the sentence!
Julie. Stay, stay [*rushing to the* King]. You have a
kind and princely heart,
Tho' sometimes it is silent: you were born
To *power*—it has not flush'd you into madness,
As it doth meaner men. Banish my husband—
Dissolve our marriage—cast me to that grave
Of human ties, where hearts congeal to ice,
In the dark convent's everlasting winter—
(Surely eno' for justice—hate—revenge)—
But spare this life, thus lonely, scath'd, and bloomless;
And when thou stand'st for judgment on thine own,
The deed shall shine beside thee as an angel.
Louis [*much affected*]. Go, go, to Baradas: annul thy
marriage,
And——
Julie [*anxiously, and watching his countenance*]. Be his
bride!
Louis. A form, a mere decorum;
Thou know'st I love thee.
Julie. O thou sea of shame,
And not one star!
[*The* King *goes up the stage, and passes through
the suite of rooms at the side, in evident emotion.*
Bar. Well, thy election, Julie;
This hand—his grave!
Julie. His grave! and I——
Bar. Can save him.—

Swear to be mine.

Julie. That were a bitterer death!
Avaunt, thou tempter! I did ask his life
A boon, and not the barter of dishonour.
The heart can break, and scorn you: wreak your malice;
Adrien and I will leave you this sad earth,
And pass together hand in hand to Heaven!

Bar. You have decided.

[*Withdraws to the side scene for a moment, and returns.*

Listen to me, Lady;
I am no base intriguer. I adored thee
From the first glance of those inspiring eyes;
With thee entwined ambition, hope, the future.
I will not lose thee! I can place thee nearest—
Ay, to the throne—nay, on the throne, perchance;
My star is at its zenith. Look upon me;
Hast thou decided?

Julie. No, no; you can see
How weak I am: be human, sir—one moment.

Bar. [*stamping his foot,* De Mauprat *appears at the side of the stage guarded*]. Behold thy husband!—Shall he pass to death,
And know thou couldst have saved him?

Julie. Adrien, speak!
But say you wish to *live!*—if not, your wife,
Your slave,—do with me as you will.

De Mau. Once more!—
Why this is mercy, Count! Oh, think, my Julie,
Life, at the best, is short,—but love immortal!

Bar. [*taking* Julie's *hand*]. Ah, loveliest—

Julie. Go, that touch has made me iron.
We have decided—death!

Bar. [*to* De Mauprat]. Now say to whom
Thou gavest the packet, and thou yet shalt live.

De Mau. I'll tell thee nothing!

Bar. Hark,—the rack!

De Mau. Thy penance
For ever, wretch!—What rack is like the conscience?

Julie. I shall be with thee soon.

Bar. [*giving the writ to the* Officer.] Hence, to the headsman!

[*The doors are thrown open. The* Huissier *announces* "His Eminence the Cardinal Duke de Richelieu."

Enter RICHELIEU, *attended by* Gentlemen, Pages, &c., *pale, feeble, and leaning on* JOSEPH, *followed by three* Secretaries of State, *attended by* Sub-Secretaries *with papers, &c.*

Julie [*rushing to* RICHELIEU]. You live—you live—and Adrien shall not die!

Rich. Not if an old man's prayers, himself near death,
Can aught avail thee, daughter! Count, you now
Hold what I hold on earth:—one boon, my Lord,
This soldier's life.

Bar. The stake,—my head!—you said it.
I cannot lose one trick.—Remove your prisoner.

Julie. No!—No!—

Enter LOUIS *from the rooms beyond.*

Rich. [*to* Officer]. Stay, Sir, one moment. My good liege,
Your worn-out servant, willing, Sire, to spare you
Some pain of conscience, would forestall your wishes.
I do resign my office.

De Mau. You!

Julie. All's over!

Rich. My end draws near. These sad ones, Sire, I love them.
I do not ask his life; but suffer justice
To halt, until I can dismiss his soul,

Charged with an old man's blessing.

Louis. Surely!

Bar. Sire——

Louis. Silence—small favour to a dying servant.

Rich. You would consign your armies to the bâton
Of your most honoured brother. Sire, so be it!
Your minister, the Count de Baradas;
A most sagacious choice!—Your Secretaries
Of State attend me, Sire, to render up
The ledgers of a realm. I do beseech you,
Suffer these noble gentlemen to learn
The nature of the glorious task that waits them,
Here, in my presence.

Louis. You say well, my Lord.
[*To* Secretaries, *as he seats himself.*
Approach, Sirs.

Rich. I—I—faint!—air—air!

[JOSEPH *and a* Gentleman *assist him to a sofa, placed beneath a window.*

I thank you—
Draw near, my children.

Bar. He's too weak to question.
Nay, scarce to speak; all's safe.

SCENE III.

Manent RICHELIEU, MAUPRAT, *and* JULIE, *the last kneeling beside the* Cardinal; *the* Officer of the Guard *behind* MAUPRAT. JOSEPH *near* RICHELIEU, *watching the* King. LOUIS. BARADAS *at the back of the* King's *chair, anxious and disturbed.* ORLEANS *at a greater distance, careless and triumphant. The* Secretaries. *As each* Secretary *advances in his turn, he takes the portfolios from the* Sub-Secretaries.

First Sec. The affairs of Portugal,
Most urgent, Sire: One short month since the Duke
Braganza was a rebel.
Louis. And is still!
First Sec. No, Sire, *he has succeeded!* He is now
Crown'd King of Portugal—craves instant succour
Against the arms of Spain.
Louis. We will not grant it
Against his lawful king. Eh, Count?
Bar. No, Sire.
First Sec. But Spain's your deadliest foe: whatever
Can weaken Spain must strengthen France. The Cardinal
Would send the succours:—[*solemnly*]—balance, Sire, of
Europe!
Louis. The Cardinal!—balance!—We'll consider.—Eh,
Count?
Bar. Yes, Sire;—fall back.
First Sec. But——
Bar. Oh! fall back, Sir.
Joseph. Humph!
Second Sec. The affairs of England, Sire, most urgent:
Charles
The First has lost a battle that decides
One half his realm,—craves moneys, Sire, and succour.
Louis. He shall have both.—Eh, Baradas?
Bar. Yes, Sire.
(Oh that despatch!—my veins are fire!)
Rich. [*feebly, but with great distinctness*]. My liege—
Forgive me—Charles's cause is lost! A man,
Named Cromwell, risen,—a great man!—your succour
Would fail—your loans be squander'd!—Pause—reflect.
Louis. Reflect.—Eh, Baradas?
Bar. Reflect, Sire.
Joseph. Humph!

Louis [*aside*]. I half repent!—No successor to Richelieu!—
Round me thrones totter!—dynasties dissolve!—
The soil he guards alone escapes the earthquake!
Joseph. Our star not yet eclipsed!—you mark the King?
Oh! had we the despatch!
Rich. Ah! Joseph!—Child—
Would I could help thee!
Enter Gentleman, *whispers* JOSEPH, *who exits hastily.*
Bar. [*to* Secretary]. Sir, fall back.
Second Sec. But——
Bar. Pshaw, Sir!
Third Sec. [*mysteriously*]. The *secret correspondence,* Sire, most urgent,—
Accounts of spies—deserters—heretics—
Assassins—poisoners—schemes against yourself!——
Louis. Myself!—most urgent!—[*looking on the documents.*]
Re-enter JOSEPH *with* FRANCOIS, *whose pourpoint is streaked with blood.* FRANCOIS *passes behind the* Cardinal's Attendants, *and, sheltered by them from the sight of* BARADAS, &c., *falls at* RICHELIEU'S *feet.*
Fran. O! my Lord!
Rich. Thou art bleeding!
Fran. A scratch—I have not fail'd——
[*Gives the packet.*
Rich. Hush!—
[*Looking at the contents.*
Third Sec. [*to* King]. Sire, the Spaniards
Have reinforced their army on the frontiers.
The Duc de Bouillon——
[RICHELIEU *to* Secretary, *giving an open parchment.*
Rich. Hold!—In this department—
A paper—here, Sire,—read yourself—then take

The Count's advice in't.

Enter DE BERINGHEN *hastily, and draws aside* BARADAS.

Bar. [*bursting from* DE BERINGHEN]. What! and reft it from thee!

Ha!—hold!

Joseph. Fall back, son, it is your turn now!

Bar. Death!—the despatch!

Louis [*reading*]. To Bouillon—and sign'd Orleans!—
Baradas, too!—league with our foes of Spain!—
Lead our Italian armies—what! to Paris!—
Capture the King—my health requires repose—
Make me subscribe my proper abdication—
Orleans, my brother Regent!—Saints of Heaven!
These are the men I loved!

[BARADAS *draws,—attempts to rush out,—is arrested.*—ORLEANS, *endeavouring to escape more quickly, meets* JOSEPH'S *eye and stops short.* RICHELIEU *falls back.*

Joseph. See to the Cardinal!

Bar. He's dying! and I yet shall dupe the King!

Louis [*rushing to* RICHELIEU]. Richelieu!—Lord Cardinal!—'tis *I* resign!—
Reign thou!

Joseph. Alas! too late!—he faints!

Louis. Reign, Richelieu!

Rich. [*feebly*]. With absolute power?——

Louis. Most absolute!—Oh! live!
If not for me—for France!

Rich. FRANCE!

Louis. Oh! this treason!—
The army—Orleans—Bouillon—Heavens!—the Spaniard!—
Where will they be next week?——

Rich. [*starting up*]. There,—at my feet!

[*To* First *and* Second Secretary.

Ere the clock strike!—the Envoys have their answer!
[*To* Third Secretary, *with a ring.*
This to De Chavigny—he knows the rest—
No need of parchment here—he must not halt
For sleep—for food.—In *my* name,—MINE!—he will
Arrest the Duc de Bouillon at the head
Of his army!—Ho! there, Count de Baradas,
Thou hast lost the stake!—Away with him!
[*As the* Guards *open the folding-doors, a view of the ante-room beyond, lined with* Courtiers. BARADAS *passes through the line.*
Ha!—ha!—
[*Snatching* DE MAUPRAT'S *death-warrant from the* Officer.
See here De Mauprat's death-writ, Julie!—
Parchment for battledores!—Embrace your husband!—
At last the old man blesses you!
Julie. O joy!
You are saved; you live—I hold you in these arms.
Mau. Never to part—
Julie. No—never, Adrien—never!
Louis [*peevishly*]. One moment makes a startling cure, Lord Cardinal.
Rich. Ay, Sire, for in one moment there did pass
Into this wither'd frame the might of France!—
My own dear France—I have thee yet—I have saved thee!
I clasp thee still!—it was thy voice that call'd me
Back from the tomb!—What mistress like our country?
Louis. For Mauprat's pardon—well! But Julie,—Richelieu,
Leave me one thing to love!—
Rich. A subject's luxury!
Yet, if you must love something, Sire—*love me!*

Louis [*smiling in spite of himself*]. Fair proxy for a young fresh Demoiselle!

Rich. Your heart speaks for my clients:—Kneel, my children,
And thank your King,—

Julie. Ah, tears like these my liege,
Are dews that mount to Heaven.

Louis. Rise—rise—be happy.

[RICHELIEU *beckons to* DE BERINGHEN.

De Ber. [*falteringly*]. My lord—you are—most—happily recovered.

Rich. But you are pale, dear Beringhen:—this air
Suits not your delicate frame—I long have thought so:—
Sleep not another night in Paris:—Go,—
Or else your precious life may be in danger.
Leave France, dear Beringhen!

De Ber. I shall have time,
More than I ask'd for—to discuss the pâté.

[*Exit* DE BERINGHEN.

Rich. [*to* ORLEANS]. For you, repentance—absence—and confession! [*To* FRANCOIS.
Never say *fail* again.—Brave boy! [*To* JOSEPH.
He'll be—
A Bishop first.

Joseph. Ah, Cardinal—

Rich. Ah, Joseph!

[*To* LOUIS—*as* DE MAURPRAT *and* JULIE *converse apart.*

See, my liege—see thro' plots and counterplots—
Thro' gain and loss—thro' glory and disgrace—
Along the plains, where passionate Discord rears
Eternal Babel—still the holy stream
Of human happiness glides on!

Louis. And must we
Thank for *that* also—our prime Minister?

Rich. No—let us own it:—there is One above
Sways the harmonious mystery of the world,
Ev'n better than prime ministers;—
Alas!
Our glories float between the earth and heaven
Like clouds which seem pavilions of the sun,
And are the playthings of the casual wind;
Still, like the cloud which drops on unseen crags
The dews the wild flower feeds on, our ambition
May from its airy height drop gladness down
On unsuspected virtue;—and the flower
May bless the cloud when it hath pass'd away!

(1)

The End

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